Hon^ble. J. C. Leslie Melville.

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THE

POEMS

OF

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN GREECE."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

POEMS OF MANY YEARS.

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POEMS

OF MANY YEARS.

TO MY FRIEND,

THE MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON.

These Poems of many years and many moods are entrusted to the sympathies of those who, having traverst the same fields of thought and of feeling, may recognise with a serious pleasure the memorials the writer has brought away.

He holds it to be the duty of every man to dispense and diffuse what has sprung up freshly and purely in his own moral being, if he possess the artistic means necessary to convey it agreeably to

others: and the merit of the poet will ever less depend on the perfection of the conduct, than on the virtue of the stream.

Should then this volume contain anything which shall be read not once only and aloud, but which shall be referred to in the solitude of the night-chamber, and remembered in the stillness of self-communion, one other voice may have been added to that vast world-chorus, which is ever rising from the universal Heart of man to the audience of God and infinite Time.

He lays just so much claim to originality as is implied in the assertion, that he has never consciously permitted himself the use of a thought or image which he knew to be elsewhere adequately exprest: how and how far he has been subject to the influ-

ences of contemporary literature, of the conversation of men of genius, of present manners and accidental conventions, he can no more calculate than he can adjust the effects of external nature upon his mind: for every writer is proportioned to his own age, though the greater are not confined within its limits.

NOTE.

In the following pages the author has indulged in some slight deviations from the orthography that happens to be in common usage at this moment of our literature. It is as well that he should avow his opinion that, in works where all attainable nicety of diction is required, such license is most legitimate, and only restrained by a very foolish, as it is a very new-fashioned, tyranny of opinion,—while in writings, where the subject-matter is of far greater import than the manner in which it is presented, it is unadvisable, in the slightest degree, to check the course of any reader's apprehension.

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POEMS.

Most blind and impotent the verse that serves but to caress
World-blossoms for their beauty's sake, nor tries their power to bless:
Better that tears should ever flow, than smiles for ever shine
On all the evil mass that chokes in man the seed divine.

Yet none the clearer sight have they who can or will not see
How everywhere the life of Love still shows itself to be,—
Still pierces thro' the tangled growth of our bewildered plain,
And, trodden down a myriad times, still germinates again

TO A CHILD

WITH BLACK EYES AND GOLDEN HAIR.

—◆—

When first, on that fair morn of May,
Thou came'st across my pilgrim way,
My joy was shaded by much fear;
Thy hair, all made of very light,
Seemed almost too supremely bright
For Earth,—I askt, Why wert Thou here?

But when I watcht those eyes below,
So clear, yet darkling like the flow
Of waters in a silent cave;
I felt they were of human birth,
Of Earth, though of the best of Earth;
Quietly lucid, sweetly grave.

Dear child, by Nature double-dowered,
Thee I would surely deem empowered
A great ensample-work to do;
To show that Man, however crowned
With rays of Heavenly Love, is bound
To Earth's serene Affections too.

TO [redacted],

FIVE YEARS OLD.

Delighted soul! that in thy new abode
Dwellest contentedly and knowest not
What men can mean who faint beneath the load
Of mortal life and mourn an earthly lot;

Who would believe thou wert so far from home?
Who could suppose thee exiled or astray?
This world of twilight whither thou art come
Seems just as welcome as thy native day.

That comely form, wherein thy thoughts are pent,
Hiding its rebel nature, serves thee still,
A pliable and pleasant instrument,
Harmonious to thy impulses and will.

Thou hast not spent as yet thy little store
Of happy instincts :—Thou canst still beguile
Painful reflection and ungrateful lore
With many a placid dream and causeless smile.

And when the awful stranger Evil bends
His eye upon thee, Thou wilt first essay
To turn him from his dark pursuits and ends
By gracious dalliance and familiar play :

As well might kindly words arrest the roll
Of billows raging o'er a wintry sea,—
O Providence ! remit to this one soul
Its destined years, and take it back to Thee.

A CHILD'S SONG.

I see the Moon, and the Moon sees me,
God bless the Moon, and God bless me.
OLD RHYME.

LADY MOON, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

Are you not tired with rolling, and never
Resting to sleep?
Why look so pale, and so sad, as for ever
Wishing to weep?

Ask me not this, little child, if you love me;
You are too bold;
I must obey my dear Father above me,
And do as I'm told.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

Youth, that pursuest with such eager pace
Thy even way,
Thou pantest on to win a mournful race;
Then stay! oh, stay!

Pause and luxuriate in thy sunny plain;
Loiter,—enjoy:
Once past, Thou never wilt come back again.
A second Boy.

The hills of Manhood wear a noble face.
When seen from far;
The mist of light from which they take their grace
Hides what they are.

The dark and weary path those cliffs between
Thou canst not know,
And how it leads to regions never-green,
Dead fields of snow.

Pause, while thou mayst, nor deem that fate thy gain,
Which, all too fast,
Will drive thee forth from this delicious plain,
A Man at last.

A SHADOW, a light cloud, an April rain,
And twenty other vain similitudes,
Betoken that fast-springing Youth eludes
The full impression of continuous pain.
Strange fallacy! when all that then we feel
Strikes home,—the veriest trifles how profound!
When there is something in each precious wound
That searing Manhood almost fails to heal.
But let the harshnesses of daily life
And all the blunt world's businesses have set
A seal upon the fountain of the heart,
Then, tangled in the party-colored strife,
We throb with Love or Hate, we meet or part,
Sigh, tremble, weep, pass onward and forget.

THE FLIGHT OF YOUTH.

No, tho' all the winds that lie
In the circle of the sky
Trace him out and pray and moan,
Each in its most plaintive tone,—
No, tho' Earth be split with sighs,
And all the Kings that reign
Over Nature's mysteries
Be our faithfullest allies,
All—all is vain ;
They may follow on his track,
But He never will come back,
Never again !

Youth is gone away,
Cruel cruel Youth,
Full of gentleness and ruth
Did we think him all his stay ;

How had he the heart to wreak
Such a woe on us so weak,
He that was so tender-meek?
How could he be made to learn
To find pleasure in our pain?
Could he leave us, to return
Never again!

Bow your heads very low,
Solemn-measured be your paces,
Gathered up in grief your faces,
Sing sad music as ye go;
In disordered handfuls strew
Strips of cypress, sprigs of rue;
In your hands be borne the bloom,
Whose long petals once and only
Look from their pale-leavèd tomb
In the darkness lonely;
Let the nightshade's beaded coral
Fall in melancholy moral
Your wan brows around,
While in very scorn ye fling
The amaranth upon the ground
As an unbelievèd thing;

What care we for its fair tale
Of beauties that can never fail,
Glories that can never wane?
No such blooms are on the track
He has past, who will come back
Never again!

Alas, we know not how he went,
We knew not he was going,
For had our tears once found a vent,
We' had stayed him with their flowing.
It was as an earthquake, when
We awoke and found him gone,
We were miserable men,
We were hopeless, every one!
Yes, he must have gone away
In his guise of every day,
In his common dress, the same
Perfect face and perfect frame;
For in feature, for in limb,
Who could be compared to him?
Firm his step, as one who knows
He is free, where'er he goes,
And withal as light of spring
As the arrow from the string;

His impassioned eye had got
Fire which the sun has not;
Silk to feel, and gold to see,
Fell his tresses full and free,
Like the morning mists that glide
Soft adown the mountain's side;
Most delicious 'twas to hear
When his voice was trilling clear,
As a silver-hearted bell,
Or to follow its low swell,
When, as dreamy winds that stray
Fainting 'mid Æolian chords,
Inner music seemed to play
Symphony to all his words;
In his hand was poised a spear,
Deftly poised, as to appear
Resting of its proper will,—
Thus a merry hunter still,
And engarlanded with bay,
Must our Youth have gone away,
Tho' we half remember now,
He had borne some little while
Something mournful in his smile—
Something serious on his brow:
Gentle Heart, perhaps he knew
The cruel deed he was about to do!

Now, between us all and Him
There are rising mountains dim,
Forests of uncounted trees,
Spaces of unmeasured seas:
Think, with Him how gay of yore
We made sunshine out of shade,—
Think with Him how light we bore
All the burden sorrow laid;
All went happily about Him,—
How shall we toil on without Him?
How without his cheering eye
Constant strength embreathing ever?
How without Him standing by
Aiding every hard endeavour?
For when faintness or disease
Had usurped upon our knees,
If he deigned our lips to kiss
With those living lips of his,
We were lightened of our pain,
We were up and hale again:—
Now, without one blessing glance
From his rose-lit countenance,
We shall die, deserted men,—
And not see him, even then!

We are cold, very cold,—
All our blood is drying old,
And a terrible heart-dearth
Reigns for us in heaven and earth :
Forth we stretch our chilly fingers
In poor effort to attain
Tepid embers, where still lingers
Some preserving warmth, in vain.
Oh ! if Love, the Sister dear
Of Youth that we have lost,
Come not in swift pity here,
Come not, with a host
Of Affections, strong and kind,
To hold up our sinking mind,
If She will not, of her grace,
Take her Brother's holy place,
And be to us, at least a part
Of what He was, in Life and Heart,
The faintness that is on our breath
Can have no other end but Death.

Oh! that I were, as I was, in the days of my youth,
when the secret of God was upon my Tabernacle!

Job, xxix. 4.

Six years, six cycles of dead hours,
Six falls of leaves, six births of flowers,
It is not that, you know full well,
That makes my labo'ring bosom swell,
'Tis not the memory of lost Time,
Since last I heard that matin chime,
That brings to sense a sleeping sorrow,
To bid this long-left scene good-morrow,—
It is the curse to feel as men,
And be not now, as we were then.

The snowy down on yonder hill
Through thousand summers glistens still,—
Yon stream will ne'er to time surrender
Its rapid path of diamond splendour,—
Yon orb, but now who swept the East,
With train of ruby' and amethyst,
Rides on, unweariedly as ever,
O'er frowning rock, and glitte'ring river;
Those trees, I own, are somewhat higher,—
The ivy round the village spire
In fuller-cluste'ring leaf has grown,—
We cannot call that cot our own,—
But what has changed in this sweet glen
As we from what our hearts were then?
Say you, the glow of hope is bright,
And if it be a meteor light,
That hurtles through the thicke'ning sky,
'Tis wise to catch it ere it die?
Tell you me, 'tis a joy to feel
Our toil increase a fellow's weal?
That, 'mid these fainting, fading, bowers,
There linger still some ama'ranth flowers,
And honest will, and honest prayer,
Will find them lurking everywhere?—

Say on, I can but add, Amen,—
We are not now as we were then.

Oh, Brother! when I gaze upon
These tombs of little blisses gone,—
When, through the dense and steamy air,
Which we with men are wont to share,
A breeze of distant youth has stole
In freshness on my fevered soul,—
I feel like one who long has lain
With madness gathe'ring in his brain,
And, bursting from the strong distress,
Wakes to a terrible consciousness.
Then blame you, that my pulse beat now,
Blame you the agony on my brow?
There *was*, when fear was all a stranger,
Ere knowledge showed the way to danger,—
When love was firm,—when faith was sure,
And head and heart alike secure;—
But now, . . . Remember you a flower,
Which we with care, from sun and shower,—
It was our mother's,—loved to guard,
And how we joyed in our reward,
When first we watcht its bloom appear,
When it was old so many a year;

And how we heard, with tearful eye,
The good old gardener's prophecy,—
For he was deep in nature's lore,—
That that bright plant would bloom no more?
The flowers fell off,—the stalk was gathered,—
The root grew dry,—the lank leaves withered,—
And, sad to lose its only pride,
The poor Agave sunk and died:
Our one, *our* only bloom is gone,
But, Brother, still we linger on.

Between the cradle and the shroud,
If chance, amid the pilgrim croud,
Though strange the time and strange the place,
We light on some familiar face,
Once loved and known, as friend knows friend,
In whom a thousand memories blend,
Which whilom slumbered dull and dim,
But rise in light and cling to him;
Though not a trait of old as wont,
Though care has knit the ample front,
And vice unstrung the well-toned frame,
Still something,—*something* is the same.
But if we ever hope to find
Some traces in that life-worn mind

Of its pure self, its simple being,
Such as it was, when, unforeseeing,
We thought that Nature's laws would fail,
Ere Sin could make its boldness quail;
Such as it was, ere sensuous things
Had clipt the bird of Eden's wings,
Ere stifled groan and secret sigh
Replaced the tear so soon brusht by,—
'Tis vain,—alas, for human shame!
There nothing, *nothing* is the same.

O that the painter's favo'rite scheme
Were not alone a painter's dream!
O that the Paradise he feigns,
Where Innocence with Childhood reigns,
And cherub forms and infant guise
Inclose the heart divinely wise,
Were not alone a Poet's creed,—
No symbol,—but a truth indeed!
That all this circling life might close
Its wearied course where first it rose,
And that our second life must be
A new, eternal, infancy,
Keeping the bliss we lose as men,
To be for aye as we were then!

By eating the fruit that grows on the banks of the river of Delight, in the Anostum, in the country of the Meropes, men gain a blessed course of life, without one moment of sadness;—when they are in years, by little and little they wax young again, recovering their former vigor and force, and thence they turn still backward, even to their first infancy, becoming little babes again, and then they die.

ANTONIO DE TORQUEMADA.

1.

BACK again, back again!
We are passing back again;
We are ceasing to be men!
Without the strife
Of waning life,
Or weary fears
Of loveless years,—

Without the darkened eye,
Without the paling brow,
Without a pulse of pain,
Out of our maturity,
We are passing now
Back again !

II.

Clap your hands ! clap your hands !
Now are broken all the bands
Of dull forms and phantom power,
That could prevent us doing
What joy would wish to do,—
For out of manhood's ruin,
We are growing, hour by hour,
Happy children too !—
From out the din
And storm of sin,
From out the fight
Of wrong and right,
Where the wrong
Is all too strong,
We glide our backward course along :
From out the chilly weather,
In which we laid, of old,
Our hearts so close together,

To keep them from the cold,—
From the folly of the wise,
From the petty war of gain,
From Pleasure's painèd votaries,
We' are hasting back again,
Into other, healthier lands,—
Clap your hands,—
Back again !

III.

Faery fruit ! faery fruit !
Can our charmèd hearts be mute,
When they feel at work within
Thy almighty medicine ?
Joy through all our hearts is tingling,—
Joy with our life-blood is mingling,—
Before us rise
The dancing eyes,
That cannot speak
Of aught but light,
Unknowing gloom,—
The rounded cheek,
For ever bright
With cool, red, bloom ;—
Our faded leaves are closing,
Our petals are reposing

Within their undevelopt stem;—
It is beautiful to see
Archetypes of infancy,
For we are growing like to them.
The wisdom of the common earth,
And Reason's servile royalty,
Dust to dust,—the nothing-worth,—
Tread it down triumphantly,
To a just oblivion,—
Freely-springing hearts and pure,
Who are putting on
Consecrated vestiture
Of a new, old, communion!—

IV.

Our home! our home!
Our native air,—our brothers' song,
That we have lost so long!
We are worthy *now* to come,
Where dwelleth the Divine;—
Thro' the narrow door of Death
Pass;—we breathe eternal breath,—
Father! father! we are thine!

YOUTH'S FAIR RESOLVE.

Dear friend, I would that our free life should be
Like the red blood that bounding from the heart
Speeds onward through each ministe'ring artery,
Bearing fresh force to each remotest part,
And stagnates never,
Till Death's uncouth and wintry mastery
Dams up the river.

Is it because our fellows are depraved
That we should leave our work, and be like them?
No,—if the laws of love and truth are braved,
From peasant's cap to jewelled diadem,—
The more's the pity;
"Ten righteous men," the Patriarch says, "had saved
"The heaven-curst city."

The hermit sage, and antient anchorite,
Who went to wilds, and made the wolves their friends,
Even they perchance had fought a better fight,
And served more righteously their being's ends,
Had they remained
In the world's pale, and kept, with perilous might,
Their faith unstained :

Had they abandoned ev'en the commune high
Which oft in solitude they held with God,—
The lonely prayer, the speechless ecstasy,
In which the angel-paths of Heaven they trod,
And sacrificed
Upon that altar which saw Jesus die,
What best they prized.

And I—oh ! think you not I too have known
'Tis sweet to muse beneath the old elm tree,
While night lets loose her drapery's spangled zone,
Or watch the sun-god woo the western sea,
With rich parade,
And send my thoughts, to brave adventure prone,
On strange crusade ?

Or else with you a' strolling hand in hand
Break lances in a tournament of rhyme,—
Dispute about the tints of faery-land,—
Or, by some heritage which olden Time
Has left the wise,
Bid wondrous pageants, as by sorce'rer's wand,
Before us rise.

If life were all like this to you and me,
How would it matter to be young or old?
Where is the privilege of youth's buoyancy,
Could we thus turn Time's iron scythe to gold?
The pleasures given
To man were all too great, and there would be
No want of heaven.

Let us go forth, and resolutely dare,
With sweat of brow, to toil our little day,—
And if a tear fall on the task of care,
In memory of those spring-hours past away,
Brush it not by!
Our hearts to God! to brother-men
Aid, labor, blessing, prayer, and then
To these a sigh.

THE LAY OF THE HUMBLE.

Le bon Dieu me dit—"Chante,
Chante, pauvre petit."

BERANGER.

I HAVE no comeliness of frame,
No pleasant range of feature;
I'am feeble, as when first I came
To earth, a weeping creature;
My voice is low whene'er I speak,
And singing faint my song;
But though thus cast among the weak,
I envy not the strong.

The trivial part in life I play
Can have so light a bearing
On other men, who, night or day,
For me are never caring;
That, though I find not much to bless,
Nor food for exaltation,
I know that I am tempted less,—
And that is consolation.

The beautiful! the noble blood!
I shrink as they pass by,—
Such power for evil or for good
Is flashing from each eye;
They are indeed the stewards of Heaven,
High-headed and strong-handed:
From those, to whom so much is given,
How much may be demanded!

'Tis true, I am hard buffeted,
Though few can be my foes,
Harsh words fall heavy on my head,
And unresisted blows;
But then I think, "had I been born,—
Hot spirit—sturdy frame—
And passion prompt to follow scorn,—
I might have done the same."

To me men are for what they are,
They wear no masks with me ;
I never sicken'd at the jar
Of ill-tuned flattery ;
I never mourned affections lent
In folly or in blindness ;—
The kindness that on me is spent
Is pure, unasking, kindness.

And most of all, I never felt
The agonizing sense
Of seeing love from passion melt
Into indifference :
The fearful shame, that day by day
Burns onward, still to burn,
To' have thrown your precious heart away,
And met this black return.

I almost fancy that the more
I am cast out from men,
Nature has made me of her store
A worthier denizen ;
As if it pleased her to caress
A plant grown up so wild,
As if the being parentless
Made me the more *her* child.

Athwart my face when blushes pass
To be so poor and weak,
I fall unto the dewy grass,
And cool my fevered cheek ;
And hear a music strangely made,
That you have never heard,
A sprite in every rustling blade,
That sings like any bird.

My dreams are dreams of pleasantness,—
But yet I always run,
As to a father's morning kiss,
When rises the round sun ;
I see the flowers on stalk and stem,
Light shrubs, and poplars tall,
Enjoy the breeze,—I rock with them,
We' are merry brothers all.

I do remember well, when first
I saw the great blue sea,—
It was no stranger-face, that burst
In terror upon me ;
My heart began, from the first glance,
His solemn pulse to follow,
I danced with every billow's dance,
And shouted to their hollo.

The Lamb that at its mother's side
Reclines, a tremulous thing,
The Robin in cold winter-tide,
The Linnet in the Spring,
All seem to be of kin to me,
And love my slender hand,—
For we are bound, by God's decree,
In one defensive band.

And children, who the worldly mind
And ways have not put on,
Are ever glad in me to find
A blithe companion :
And when for play they leave their homes,
Left to their own sweet glee,
They hear my step, and cry, " He comes,
" Our little friend,—'tis he."

Have you been out some starry night,
And found it joy to bend
Your eyes to one particular light,
Till it became a friend ?
And then, so loved that gliste'ning spot,
That, whether it were far
Or more or less, it mattered not,—
It still was your own star.

Thus, and thus only, can you know,
How I, even scornèd I,
Can live in love, tho' set so low,
And' my ladie-love so high;
Thus learn, that on this varied ball,
Whate'er can breathe and move,
The meanest, lornest, thing of all—
Still owns its right to love.

With no fair round of household cares
Will my lone hearth be blest,
Nor can the snow of my old hairs
Fall on a loving breast;
No darling pledge of spousal faith
Shall I be found possessing,
To whom a blessing with my breath
Would be a double blessing:

But yet my love with sweets is rife,
With happiness it teems,
It beautifies my waking life,
And waits upon my dreams;
A shape that floats upon the night,
Like foam upon the sea,—
A voice of seraphim,—a light
Of present Deity!

I hide me in the dark arcade,
When she walks forth alone,—
I feast upon her hair's rich braid,—
Her half-unclaspèd zone:
I watch the flittings of her dress,
The bending boughs between,—
I trace her footstep's faery press
On' the scarcely ruffled green.

Oh deep delight! the frail guitar
Trembles beneath her hand,
She sings a song she brought from far,
I cannot understand;
Her voice is *always* as from heaven,
But yet I seem to hear
Its music best, when thus 'tis given
All music to my ear.

She' has turned her tender eyes around,
And seen me crouching there,
And smiles, just as that last full sound
Is fainting on the air;
And now, I can go forth so proud,
And raise my head so tall,—
My heart within me beats so loud,
And musical withal:—

And there is summer all the while,
Mid-winter tho' it be,—
How should the universe not smile,
When she has smiled on me?
For tho' that smile can nothing more
Than merest pity prove,
Yet pity, it was sung of yore,
Is not *so* far from love.

From what a croud of lovers' woes
My weakness is exempt!
How far more fortunate than those
Who mark me for contempt!
No fear of rival happiness
My fervent glory smothers,
The zephyr fans me none the less
That it is bland to others.

Thus without share in coin or land,
But well content to hold
The wealth of Nature in my hand,
One flail of virgin gold,—
My Love above me like a sun,—
My own bright thoughts my wings,—
Thro' life I trust to flutter on,
As gay as aught that sings.

One hour I own I dread,—to die
Alone and unbefriended,—
No soothing voice, no tearful eye,—
But that must soon be ended ;
And then I shall receive my part
Of everlasting treasure,
In that just world where each man's heart
Will be his only measure.

STANZAS.

Because, from all that round Thee move,
Planets of Beauty, Strength, and Grace,
I am elected to Thy love,
And have my home in Thy embrace,
I wonder all men do not see
The crown that Thou hast set on me.

Because, when prostrate at Thy feet,
Thou didst emparadise my pain,—
Because Thy heart on mine has beat,
Thy head within my hands has lain,
I am transfigured, by that sign,
Into a being like to Thine.

The mirror from its glossy plain
Receiving still returns the light,
And being generous of its gain,
Augments the very solar might:
What unreflected light would be,
Is just Thy spirit without me.

Thou art the flame, whose rising spire
In the dark air sublimely sways,
And I the tempest that swift fire
Gathers at first and then obeys:
All that was Thine ere we were wed
Have I by right inherited.

Is life a stream? Then from Thy hair
One rosebud on the current fell,
And straight it turned to crystal there,
As adamant immoveable:
Its steadfast place shall know no more
The sense of after and before.

Is life a plant? The King of years
To mine nor good nor ill can bring;—
Mine grows no more; no more it fears
Even the brushing of his wing:
With sheathèd scythe I see him go,—
I have no flowers that *he* can mow.

AN ANSWER.

All fair things have soft approaches,
Quiet steps are still the sure;
It were hard to point aright
At what instant morning light
Shy and solemn-paced encroaches
On the desolate obscure;—
Who can read the growth of flowers
Syllable by syllable?
Who has sight or ear to tell,
Or by moments or by hours,
At what rate the sappy tree,
Full of life, and life in spring,
Every sleekest limb embosses
With the buds its vigor glosses,—
At what rate the buds with glee
Burst, and show the tender wing

Of the leaf that hardly dares
Trust to inexperienced airs?
Who can measure out the pace
Of the smiles on Nature's face?

Thou loveliest of the thoughts of God,
Creation's antitype and end,
Thou treadest so the vernal sod
That slimmest grasses hardly bend;—
I feel thy presence sensible
On my ideal supervene,
Yet just the moment cannot tell
That lies those two bright states between;—
No memory has an arm to reach
The morning twilight of our thought,—
The infant's use of sight and speech
Is all unchallenged and unsought;
And yet thou askest, winning one,
That I should now unriddler be,
To tell thee when I first begun
To love and honor Thee!

SONGS,

FROM THE VENETIAN OF BURATTI.

I.

Pleasant were it, Nina mine,
Could our Hearts, by faery powers,
Renovate their life divine,
Like the trees and herbs and flowers.

So might we, in fond accord,
As the fresh ripe Hearts appear;
Each the other's Love reward,
With the first-fruits of the year.

Fragrance from that wondrous plant
Might your giddy sex restrain,—
Such refreshment would enchant
The most faithless back again.

But in restless pleasure using
One poor Heart, from year to year,
We shall both our Hearts be losing,—
Worn to nothing,—Nina dear.

II.

Oh! what a May-day,—what a dear May-day!
Feel, what a breeze, love,
Undulates o'er us,—
Meadow and trees, love,
Glisten before us,—
Light, in all showers,
Falls from the flowers,
Hear, how they ask us, "Come and sit down."—(*Bis.*)

Well, let us rest with them,—well let us rest with them,
Two other blossoms,
Quiet and lonely,
While from their bosoms
Nightingales only
Secrets revealing,
We shall be stealing
Things that most surely the world doesn't know.—(*Bis.*)

Guess, my own Nina,—guess, my own Nina,
What they are singing!
That a deep passion,
Rooted and clinging
I' the right fashion,
Never can measure
Fullness of pleasure,
But when together alone,—all alone!—(*Bis.*)

Fare you well, old world!—fare you well, old world!
This one is ours,
Shepherds,—May-weather,—
We and the flowers
Blooming together,—
Where, never jealous,
Nightingales tell us
What they know, oh! how much, better than we!—(*Bis.*)

SONG,

AFTER THE OLD MANNER.

My heart is freited full of love,
As full as any argosy,
With gems below and gems above,
And ready for the open sea,
For the wind is blowing summerly.

Full strings of nature's beaded pearl,
Sweet tears! composed in amorous ties;
And turkis-lockets, that no churl
Hath fashioned out mechanic-wise,—
But all made up of thy blue eyes:

And girdles wove of subtle sound,
And thoughts not trusted to the air,
Of antique mould,—the same as bound,
In Paradise, the primal pair,
Before Love's arts and niceness were:

And carcanets of living sighs;
Gums that had dropt from Love's own stem;
And one small jewel most I prize,—
The darling gaud of all of them,—
I wot, so rare and fine a gem
Ne'er glowed on Eastern anadem.

I've cased the rubies of thy smiles,
In rich and triply-plated gold;
But *this* no other wealth defiles,
Itself itself can only hold—
—The stealthy kiss on Maple-wold.

LINES

WRITTEN AT THE BATHS OF LUCCA.

—•—

The fireflies, pulsing forth their rapid gleams,
Are the' only light
That breaks the night ;
A stream, that has the voice of many streams,
Is the' only sound
All around :
And we have found our way to the rude stone,
Where many a twilight we have sat alone,
Though in this summer darkness never yet :
We have had happy, happy, moments here,
We have had thoughts we never can forget,
Which will go on with us beyond the bier.
The very lineaments of thy dear face
I do not see, but yet its influence

I feel, ev'en as my outward sense perceives
The freshe'ning presence of the chesnut leaves,
Whose vaguest forms my eye can only trace,
By following where the darkness seems mōst dense.
What light, what sight, what form, can be to us
Beautiful as this gloom?
We have come down, alive and consciöus,
Into a blessèd tomb:
We' have left the world behind us,
Her vexations cannot find us,
We are too far away;
There is *something* to gainsay
In the life of every day;
But in this delicious death
We let go our mortal breath,
Nought to feel and hear and see,
But our hearts' felicity;
Nought with which to be at war,
Nought to fret our shame or pride,
Knowing only that we are,
Caring not what is beside.

FAMILIAR LOVE.

We read together, reading the same book,
Our heads bent forward in a half embrace,
So that each shade that either spirit took
Was strait reflected in the other's face :
We read, not silent, nor aloud, but each
Followed the eye that past the page along,
With a low murmuring sound, that was not speech,
Yet with so much monotony,
In its half slumbering harmony,
You might not call it song ;
More like a bee, that in the noon rejoices,
Than any customed mood of human voices.

Then if some wayward or disputed sense
Made cease awhile that music, and brought on
A strife of gracious-worded difference,
Too light to hurt our souls' dear unison,
We had experience of a blissful state,
In which our powers of thought stood separate,
Each, in its own high freedom, set apart,
But both close folded in one loving heart;
So that we seemed, without conceit, to be
Both one and two in our identity.

We prayed together, praying the same prayer,
But each that prayed did seem to be alone,
And saw the other in a golden air
Poised far away, beneath a vacant throne,
Becko'ning the kneeler to arise and sit
Within the glory which encompast it:
And when obeyed, the Vision stood beside,
And led the way through the' upper hyaline,
Smiling in beauty tenfold glorified,
Which, while on earth, had seemed enough divine,
The beauty of the Spirit-Bride,
Who guided the rapt Florentine.

The depth of human reason must become
As deep as is the holy human heart,
Ere aught in written phrases can impart
The might and meaning of that extasy
To those low souls, who hold the mystery
Of the' unseen universe for dark and dumb.

But we were mortal still, and when again
We raised our bended knees, I do not say
That our descending spirits felt no pain
To meet the dimness of an earthly day;
Yet not as those disheartened, and the more
Debased, the higher that they rose before,
But, from the exaltation of that hour,
Out of God's choicest treasury, bringing down
New virtue to sustain all ill,—new power
To braid Life's thorns into a regal crown,
We past into the outer world, to prove
The strength miraculous of united Love.

POETRY AND THE POET.

When, in a frame of liquid verse,
I read you how pure Love's delight
Is turned to Life's consummate curse,
By woman's pride and hard despite,—
Full many a sympathising chord
Vibrated all your soul along;
You trembled at each poignant word,
And wept ere I had closed the song.

But when, in rude and broken prose,
I laid my heart before you bare,—
Dared the deep misery to disclose,
Which you had long awakened there;

A trivial laugh, a pitying look
(Yet half of scorn) was all you gave,—
You bent before the lifeless Book,
Though loth a living Heart to save.

My Art is not a vulgar craft
To work some passing Pleasure-spell,—
There is no virtue in the draught
For those who desecrate the well:
Proud Loveliness! retain your sway,—
Leave me to suffer as I can,
But do not seem to love the Lay,
And mock the Poet and the Man.

TO MYRRHA,

ON PARTING.

I know not, whether such great power
Is in despair,—it may be so,—
But, Myrrha, ere this ebbing hour
Is over, I will try to go :
Once more the glory of your form
Shall fall upon my path,—once more !
And fear not lest the inner storm
Should burst the bounds it kept before.

I have one last, light boon to pray—
Do not be mercilessly kind ;
Hold back your hand, and turn away
Those splendors I must leave behind ;

Or arm your eyes with chilly glare,
(Though wont to be so burning-bright)
Like their far sisters of the air,
Which light, but cannot warm, the night.

But most of all, I could not bear
From you that mocking word, "Farewell!"—
How well my riven heart will fare,
I think I have not now to tell.
Be silent, passionless—the ghost
Of your own self—a solemn shade,
Whose form, to others wholly lost,
In my deep soul, as in a grave, is laid.

TO MYRRHA,

ON RETURNING.

My spirit staggered at the sight,
So painful and so strange,
I could not think, that years had might
To work such fearful change;
And ere I ceased from wondering,
My tears fell fast and free,
That wretched, stricken, hopeless, thing, —
I dared not call it Thee.

If I had heard that thou wert dead,
I hastily had cried,
" She was so richly favorèd,
God must forgive her pride;
My heart lay withered, while the crown
Of life was fresh upon her, —
I linger still, she has gone down
In beauty and in honor."

But now, to see thy living death,—
Power, glory, arts, all gone,—
Thy empire lost, and thy poor breath
Still vainly struggling on!
Alas! a thought of saddest weight
Presses and will have vent:
"Had she not scorned my love,—her fate
Had been so different!

"Had her heart bent its haughty will
To take me for its lord,
She had been proudly happy still,
Still honored, still adored;
The weak love-ties of face and frame
Time easily may sever,
But *I* had thought her still the same,
As beautiful as ever.

"She had *then* felt no shame or sorrow,
At seeing fall away
The slaves who mock the god to-morrow,
They worshipt all to-day;
While I preserved, with honest truth,
Through every varying stage,
Her image which adorned my youth,
To glorify my age."

And do not treat this thought as light,—
Nor ask, with taunting sign,
" Has then thy life-course been so bright
That thou canst scorn at mine ?"
Myrrha,—the name of Misery
Is clear upon my brow,
Yet am I not, nor e'er can be,
So lorn a thing as Thou.

He, who for Love has undergone
The worst that can befall,
Is happier thousand-fold than one,
Who never loved at all ;
A grace within his soul has reigned,
Which nothing else can bring—
Thank God for all that I have gained.
By that high suffering !

FROM THE ITALIAN

OF

MICHEL AGNOLO.

I.

I READ deep mysteries in thy loveliness,
With my thought's eye, unutterable here;
I trace a soul, though bound in fleshly dress,
Alive with beauty, and to God most near;
And if the ribald crowd, the base or vain,
At one, who is not of them, point and jeer,
I have not less my glory and my gain,
Strong will,—pure love,—and loyalty sincere.
To that blest source, whence Man and Nature flow,
All beauty bears affinity—this below,
More than aught else, to seek becomes the wise;
Nor other heav'n-dropt fruit, nor mightier sign,
Is granted us,—but love, and love like mine,
Lifts us to God, and makes Death Paradise.

II.

Now to old feelings I come back,
With age of heart and years opprest,
As all things from a wande'ring track
Turn to their centre's natu'ral rest.
In heaven's own hand, the keys I found
An entrance to her heart to win,
While Love the gentle lock turned round,
To let the pure Adorer in.
All ill desires she chases far,
And, where the few and godlike are,
Though all outworn, she bids me speed ;
Such graces on her presence wait,
So precious-sweet, so marvellous-great,
That Death for Her is Life indeed.

ACROSTIC.

IN THE BEGINNING OF AN ALBUM.

—✦—

Many a leaf of motley hue,
Amber, rose, and tender blue,
Runs between the customed white,
In this book, where lady's knight
Any random verse may write.

Joyous thought and witty line
Alternating with neat design,
Never shut to fools or sages,
Ever fill these varied pages!

Nature's hand has fashioned thee
Even as this book to be;
With a heart where Life will throw
Tinted lights of joy and woe
O'er the Album, but as yet
New, unwritten on,—as yet!

Elveden, 1831.

THERE' are gold-bright Suns in worlds above,
And blazing gems in worlds below,
Our world has Love and only Love,
For living warmth and jewel glow:
God's Love is sunlight to the good,
And Woman's pure as diamond sheen,
And Friendship's mystic brotherhood
In twilight beauty lies between.

WHEN Love was stricken with disgust
At the cold world's unnatu'ral sway,
He shook in scorn its golden dust
From his transparent feet away:
And sought, in pilgrim's weeds, a spot
For penance fit, lone, dark, and bare,
Where even Hope's wan bloom was not,—
He found my heart, and laid him there.

FROM THE PROVENÇALE.

Oh ! thanks to those that with a hand so light
Proffer the fair their sweet unmeaning lays,
Else had I never praised my Love aright,
Singing " her loveliness bemocks all praise."
For had men deemed such flatteries true indeed,
Nor fondly lavisht on each favorite clainer,
My Lady must have mist her beauty's meed,—
I am not insolent enough to name her.

AFTER NOVALIS.

—•—

In thousand forms, Eternal Maid,
Has pious Art imagined Thee,
But never wert Thou so pourtrayed,
As once, that once, Thou cam'st to me.
I only know that since that sight
I take no thought of night or day,
And all the world's material might
Flees like a shamèd child away.
Thou badst me drink, and since full deep
I drained the cup thy hand had given,
A perfect rest, that was not sleep,
Past to my soul, and made it Heaven.

ON LADY C———.

IN DECLINING HEALTH.

Gently supported by the ready aid
Of loving hands, whose little work of toil
Her grateful prodigality repaid
With all the benediction of her smile,
She turned her failing feet
To the soft-pillowed seat,
Dispensing kindly greetings all the while.

Before the tranquil beauty of her face
I bowed in spirit, thinking that she were
A suffe'ring Angel, whom the special grace
Of God intrusted to our pious care,
That we might learn from her
The art to minister
To heavenly beings in seraphic air.

There seemed to lie a weight upon her brain,
That ever prest her blue-veined eyelids down,
But could not dim her lustrous eyes with pain,
Nor seam her forehead with the faintest frown;
She was as she were proud,
So young, to be allowed
To follow Him who wore the thorny crown.

Nor was she sad, but over every mood,
To which her lightly-pliant mind gave birth,
Gracefully changing, did a spirit brood,
Of quiet gaie'ty, and serenest mirth;
And thus her voice did flow,
So beautifully low,
A stream whose music was no thing of earth.

Woman divine! ideal best-beloved,
Here was *thy* image realised to me;
In sensible existence lived and moved
The vision of my sacred phantasy;
Madonna! Mary mine!
Her look, her smile, was thine,—
And gazing on that form, I worshipt Thee.

NAPLES, June, 1832.

GHAZELES.

I.

Sister! I will go with Thee;
How can I not go with Thee?
What am I for, but to share
Thought, and joy, and woe with Thee?
I have known the' unstainèd peace
Children only know—with Thee;
I have watcht the chequered blooms
Of my fortune blow—with Thee;
I must part the scanty hope
Our low fates bestow—with Thee;
Wish I with the great to live,
With the wealthy? No! with Thee;
Nature's hand has mated us,—
Who but I can go with Thee?

II.

THERE are few to whom, expiring, I would say, Forget
me not;
The busy world, the many-minded,—why should it forget
me not?
I have never worn its honors, never won its open shame,
Never bent before it, never wooed it to forget me not;
But if e'er my hand has wakened grateful hearts to yearn
to mine,
If I ever earned kind friendship, let those friends forget
me not;
And for her who was and is my soul of soul—my life of
life—
'Twould be wicked doubt to ask it—Leila will forget me
not.
Then mayst *thou* of all remembrance—thou whose know-
ledge only sleeps
In the free-will of thy justice - Father—thou - forget me
not!

III.

WRITTEN AT AMALFI.

It is the mid-May Sun, that, rayless and peacefully gleaming,
Out of its night's short prison, this blessèd of lands is redeeming;
It is the fire evoked from the hearts of the citron and orange,
So that they hang, like lamps of the day, translucently beaming;
It is the veinless water, and air unsoiled by a vapor,
Save what, out of the fullness of life, from the valley is steaming;
It is the olive that smiles, even he, the sad growth of the moonlight,
Over the flowers, whose breasts triple-folded with odours are teeming;
Yes, it is these bright births, that to me are a shame and an anguish,
They are alive and awake, — *I* dream, and know I am dreaming;

I cannot bathe *my* soul in this ocean of passion and
beauty,—
Not *one* dew-drop is on me of all that about me is
streaming;
Oh! I am thirsty for Life,—I pant for the freshness of
Nature,
Bound in the World's dead sleep—dried up by its trea-
cherous seeming.

IV.

TO ——— ———.

WHEREVER Beauty is, I find thee there,—
Through every veil and guise, I find thee there:
Where the low zephyr dreams among thick flowers,
Embalmer of sweet thoughts! I find thee there;
Where full cascades leap down with curvèd steps,
Form of essential Grace! I find thee there;
In the broad mirror of the summer-sea,
Crystal entire of Truth! I find thee there;
In the unshaded presence of the sun,
Illuminating Mind! I find thee there;
In the mild splendors which enjoy the night,
Radiance of gentlest Love! I find thee there;
In the ecstatic realms that Prayer reveals,
There, Humble Holiness! I find thee there.

These lines may remind the German scholar of one of Göthe's most exquisite and most untranslatable Poems.

v.

My own friend, my old friend!
Time's a soldier bold, friend!
Of his lofty prowess
Many a tale is told, friend!
Nations are his puppets,
To be bought and sold, friend!
He can mock the conqueror,
Raze his strongest hold, friend!
Fool the stern philosopher,
Win the miser's gold, friend!
But though earthly nature
Has so frail a mould, friend!
What the tyrant cannot do
Is to make *us* cold, friend!

VI.

I've a Friend, a staunch Friend; listen, listen, Mary mine;
There's none such wherever Phœbus winds his airy line;
When I rise at morn-time,—ere the grass his dewy tears
Dries away, she meets me, beck'oning oft with wary sign,
That I tread discreetly, while she shows how round about
With marigolds and violets she has prankt her dairy fine,—
That the milk, fresh steaming, may be sweeter to my lips,
Crowned with glowing blossoms,—so too is it, faery mine;
When at eve out-wearied I approach, she brings me down
What her own white hands have prest—a flask of chary wine.
There it is,—the nectar! where then is the Friend I mean?
Where but here, beside me? kiss me, bless me, Mary mine.

VII.

Shade not the light within thine eyes,
The wondrous light within thine eyes ;
The Sun is all too fierce to hold
Light such as that within thine eyes,—
Yet is the passion of his warmth
Less deep than that within thine eyes ;
The Moon is all too cold to wear
Light such as that within thine eyes,—
Yet is her flame less silver-clear
Than that which glows within thine eyes.
Thou art my Heaven ; my Sun and Moon
Are the mere light within thine eyes ;
Nature, that gave the world those orbs,
Gave me the light within thine eyes ;—
I, and I only, can repose
Within the light within thine eyes ;
Oh ! Leila, what would be my gloom,
Without the light within thine eyes ?

VIII.

All things once are things for ever;
Soul, once living, lives for ever;
Blame not what is only once,
When that once endures for ever;
Love, once felt, though soon forgot,
Moulds the heart to good for ever;
Once betrayed from childly faith,
Man is conscious man for ever;
Once the void of life revealed,
It must deepen on for ever,
Unless God fill up the heart
With himself for once and ever:
Once made God and man at once,
God and man are one for ever.

FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE.

If I could coldly sum the love
That we each other bear,
My heart would to itself disprove
The truth of what was there;—
Its willing utte'rance should express
Nothing but joy and thankfulness.

Yet Friendship is so blurred a name,
A good so ill-discerned,
That if the nature of the flame
That in our bosoms burned
Were treasured in becoming rhymes,
It might have worth in after-times.

The Lover is a God,—the ground
He treads on is not ours;
His soul by other laws is bound,
Sustained by other powers;
We, children of a lowlier lot,
Listen, and understand him not.

Liver of a diviner life,
He turns a vacant gaze
Toward the theatre of strife,
Where we consume our days;
His own, and that one other heart,
Form for his self a world apart:

A sphere whose sympathies are wings
On which he rests sublime,
Above the shifts of casual things,
Above the flow of time;
How should he feel, how can he know
The sense of what goes on below?

Reprove him not,—no selfish aim
Here leads to selfish ends;
You might as well the infant blame
That smiles to grieving friends:
Could all thus love, and love endure,
Our world would want no other cure.

But few are the elect, for whom
This fruit is on the stem,—
And for that few an early tomb
Is open,—not for them,
But for their love; for they live on,
Sorrow and shame! when Love is gone:

They who have dwelt at Heaven's own gate,
And felt the light within,
Come down to our poor mortal state,
Indiffe'rence, care, and sin;
And their dimmed spirits hardly bear
A trace to tell what once they were.

Fever and Health their thirst may slake
At one and the same stream;
The dreamer knows not till he wake
The falsehood of his dream:
How, *while* I love thee, can I prove
The surer nature of *our* love?

It is, that while our choicest hours
Are closed from vulgar ken,
We daily use our active powers,—
Are men to brother men,—
It is, that, with our hands in one,
We do the work that should be done.

Our hands in one, we will not shrink
From life's severest due,—
Our hands in one, we will not blink
The terrible and true;
What each would feel a heavy blow
Falls on us both as autumn snow.

The simple unpresumptuous sway,
By which our hearts are ruled,
Contains no seed of self-decay;
Too tempe'rate to be cooled,
Our Passion fears no blast of ill,
No winter, till the one last chill.

And even then no furious grief
Shall shake the mourner's mind,—
He will reject no small relief
Kind Heaven may leave behind,
Nor set at nought his bliss enjoyed,
When now by human fate alloyed.

TO A. S. O'B.

FROM FERRARA.

It is a happy thought, I ween,
That, with my heart and fancy free,
Though seas and nations lie between,
I still am side by side with thee.

Though strange in this illustrious land,
Distraught by many' a pleasant care,
One simple trace of thy dear hand
Begets me wings and takes me there.

I sit within thy small still room,
I feel thy low-embreathèd tone
Come towards me, in the evening gloom,—
I live for thee and thee alone.

And, where yon limes colossal bower
Draws out its long impleachèd aisle,
I walk with thee the noontide hour,
Listen thy laugh, and watch thy smile.

Thou too, from out the planet crowd,
Of which thou art the life and sun,
When answered jest and frolic loud
Goad the light moments as they run,—

Wilt send thy heart a silent way
On embassy of love to me,—
And trust ye, be it night or day,
I shall receive it royally.

Thus, tho' in outward space apart,
I see thee, hear thee, know thee true;
For, verst in Friendship's sacred art,
The Spirit has its senses too.

A LAMENT.

I HEAR them upbraid you,—they mingle your name
With lightness and folly, and almost with shame ;
And they, who have croucht at the bend of your brow,
With familiar indiffe'rence prate of you now.

Where now is the fountain of beauty and joy,
That thrilled through the heart of the care-hating boy ?
With love, and with music, that fountain plays on,—
But the spirit, that baskt in its freshness, is gone.

Oh ! were it stern Science that led you away,
Or a flow of dark feeling that made you less gay,
I should mourn that so early the shadows were cast,
But the path *might* have led into sunlight at last.

Not so, now the world, with its gilding and glare,
Has bid you to pleasure, and prisoned you there;
And the blazoned saloon, and the mirth-breathing hall,
And silver-sweet flatteries, hold you in thrall:

For the friends of your boyhood—the innocent few,
Whose hearts knew you well, and whose hearts you too knew,
From their home in your breast have been forced, one by one,—
And in that bleak place can I linger alone?

I too must begone,—with those who have seen
The manifold promise of what you have been,
Though they who so loved will still gaze from afar,
If it be but to weep, when they see what you are.

THE FRIENDSHIP FLOWER.

When first the Friendship-flower is planted
Within the garden of your soul,
Little of care or thought are wanted
To guard its beauty fresh and whole ;
But when the one empassioned age
Has full revealed the magic bloom,
A wise and holy tutelage
Alone can shun the open tomb.

It is not Absence you should dread,—
For Absence is the very air
In which, if sound at root, the head
Shall wave most wonderful and fair ;
With sympathies of joy and sorrow
Fed, as with morn and even dews,
Ideal coloring it may borrow
Richer than ever earthly hues.

But oft the plant, whose leaves unsere
Refresh the desert, hardly brooks
The common-peopled atmosphere
Of daily thoughts and words and looks ;
It trembles at the brushing wings
Of many' a careless fashion-fly,
And strange suspicions aim their stings
To taint it as they wanton by.

Rare is the heart to bear a flower,
That must not wholly fall and fade,
Where alien feelings, hour by hour,
Spring up, beset, and overshade ;
Better, a child of care and toil,
To glorify some needy spot,
Than in a glad redundant soil
To pine neglected and forgot.

Yet when, at last, by human slight,
Or close of their permitted day,
From the sweet world of life and light
Such fine creations lapse away,—
Bury the relics that retain
Sick odours of departed pride,—
Hoard as ye will your memory's gain,
But let them perish where they died.

LEONORE.

A REST,—a sure and lowly rest,
For Leonore,—
She asks no more,
She prays not to be blest ;—
Go ye on a holy quest,
Where or how to find a rest
For Leonore.

Lay her on the front of Spring,
When the tipsy breezes sing,
Speeding on the primrose hours,
Singing aye a birthday song,
" Merrily live, for ye live not long,"
To the budding trees and flowers ;
Go ye on another quest
Once more,—
The Spring-time has no rest
For Leonore ;

Would not a new-year's madrigal
Sound strangely at a funeral?

When the air is full of heat,—
And' the winds' light feet
Hang languidly,—
Let her lie
On the Summer's throbbing breast;
And if the Time's deep extasy
Can lull her not to rest,
Where is Nature's sorcery?
For now that all is still,
Now that each bird is sleeping on
The wing of his companion,
That erst was chirping cheerily,
And' the brook goes on too wearily
To turn the cottage mill;
Now, that ye might in pleasaunce say,
All things are as they died in May,
But God forbids them to decay;
What seek ye more
For Leonore?

Alas for her! she cannot weep,
Alas for her! she cannot sleep,

For her spirit ever seems
In a host of wavy dreams,
Tossing, tossing, to and fro,
In the fever and the glow,
Under which all other things
Drop their heavy wings:
She feels the hot air vibrating,—
She hears the silence whispering,—
She sees an agony of life,
In every mute and corpse-like feature
Of the lethargy of nature,
As when dead men walk the air,—
Mixing in a fearful strife
Forms that are and thoughts that were.
Go ye on another quest
Once more,—
The pant of summer has no rest
For wearied Leonore.

When the glazed and steady sky
Rests above the prisoned earth,
With the year about to die,
Or the new one from its birth
Gazing on the face of Time,
In a sullen, voiceless prime,—

Oh! now and here
All, all is drear,
And numbing chill,
For good or ill;
All memory is lost
I' the slumber of the frost.
Go ye not another quest
For Leonore,—
Go no more;
Leave her here, and let her rest,
Like the bloom of steadfast snow,
Borne i' the year's first throe;
The only flower in all the vale
That can tell no other tale,
But a legend sad and rude,
Full of cold and solitude,
Knowing nothing of the shade
Where its relics will be laid:
Here let her lie;
And in the' uncovered noon of night,—
In the silver-gray moonlight,
Here let her die.

THE MEMORY OF LOVE.

Religious Love ! it is most sure and true,
That Man, before he felt the dank night air
Of this our nether birth, thy kingdom knew,
And bathed his Spirit in the day-spring there.

Else could world-withered age and flippant youth,
Minds of unloving and unlovely mould,
Who hold the "antient lie" for solid truth,
And prize its wretched life-dross all as gold,—

Could these, the minions of the dust,—even these,
Descant of thee as a familiar name,—
Detect thy signs, revere thy mysteries,
And, godless else, adore thy altar-flame?

And Poets too have been, who boldly own
They never felt thy influence o'er them shine,
But whose high Art has built thee many a throne,
Where thou canst fitly sit, confest divine.

Remember then, oh Pilgrim! and beware,
Thou, with that Memory for a master-key,
Wilt open Heaven, and be no alien there,—
For as thou hono'rest Love,—so will Love honor thee.

THE FLOWER-GARDEN.

O PENSIVE Sister! thy tear-darkened gaze
I understand, whene'er thou look'st upon
The Garden's gilded green and color'd blaze,
The gay society of flowers and sun.

Thou thinkest of the withe'ring that must come,
The quenching of this radiance all around,
The haste'ning change in Nature's merriest home,
The future blackness of the orphaned ground.

Thou thinkest too of those more precious blooms,
The firstling honors of thy Life's fresh field,
The childly feelings that have all their tombs,
The hopes of youth that now no odours yield :

Still many a blessed sense, in living glee,
Waves its bright form to glorify thy breast,
But this fair scene's perverse morality
Tells thee, they all will perish like the rest:

Yet pluck them, hurt them not; whate'er betides,
Touch not with wilful force those flowers of thine,—
Let Death receive them his invio'late brides,
They are the destined vestals of his shrine.

And if those children of the' insensate earth
Go down in peace to a prolific grave,—
If Nature raises in continuous birth
The plant whose present grace she will not save,—

So some deep-grounded root or visi'ble seed,
When these Heart-blossoms fade, may still remain,
In a new season of thy Being, decreed
To rise to light and loveliness again.

WRITTEN AT ROME.

To search for lore in spacious libraries,
And find it hid in tongues to you unknown ;
To wait deaf-eared near swelling minstrelsies,
Watch every action, but not catch one tone;—
Amid a thousand breathless votaries,
To feel yourself dry-hearted as a stone,—
Are images of that, which, hour by hour,
Consumes my heart, the strife of Will and Power.

The Beauty of the past before my eyes
Stands ever in each fable-haunted place,
I know her form in every dark disguise,
But never look upon her open face;
O'er every limb a veil thick-folded lies,
Showing poor outline of a perfect grace,
Yet just enough to make the sickened mind
Grieve doubly for the treasures hid behind.

Thro' great memorials wande'ring to and fro,
Waves of old Time about me seem to roll,
Most like a tune heard somewhere long ago,
Whose sepa'rate notes have left upon my soul
Some footmarks as they past, and though I know
That memory's hardest toil can raise the whole
Into continuous being, nev'er again,
I still strive on as one in love with pain.—

O thou! to whom the wearisome disease
Of Past and Present is an alien thing,
Thou pure Existence! whose severe decrees
Forbid a living man his soul to bring
Into a timeless Eden of sweet ease,
Clear-eyed, clear-hearted,—lay thy loving wing
In Death upon me,—if that way alone
Thy great Creation-thought thou wilt to me make known.

1834.

MOMENTS.

I LIE in a heavy trance,
With' a world of dream without me,
Shapes of shadow dance,
In wavering bands about me ;
But, at times, some mystic things
Appear in this phantom lair,
That almost seem to me visitings
Of Truth known elsewhere :
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A prayer in an hour of pain,
Begun in an undertone,
Then lowered, as it would fain
Be heard by the heart alone ;

A throb, when the soul is entered
By a light that is lit above,
Where the God of Nature has centered
The Beauty of Love.—
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A look that is telling a tale,
Which looks alone dare tell,—
When' a cheek is no longer pale,
That has caught the glance, as it fell ;
A touch, which seems to unlock
Treasures unknown as yet,
And the bitter-sweet first shock,
One can never forget ;—
The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A sense of an earnest Will,
To help the lowly-living,—
And a terrible heart-thrill,
If you' have no power of giving ;
An arm of aid to the weak,
A friendly hand to the friendless,
Kind words, so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless :

The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

The moment we think we have learnt
The lore of the all-wise One,
By which we could stand unburnt,
On the ridge of the seething sun:
The moment we grasp at the clue,
Long-lost and strangely riven,
Which guides our soul to the True,
And the Poet to Heaven.
The world is wide, these things are small,—
If they be nothing, what is there at all?

THE MEN OF OLD.

I know not that the men of old
Were better than men now,
Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,
Of more ingenuous brow:
I heed not those who pine for force
A ghost of Time to raise,
As if they thus could check the course
Of these appointed days.

Still is it true, and over true,
That I delight to close
This book of life self-wise and new,
And let my thoughts repose
On all that humble happiness,
The world has since foregone,—
The daylight of contentedness
That on those faces shone!

With rights, tho' not too closely scanned,
Enjoyed, as far as known,—
With will by no reverse unmanned,—
With pulse of even tone,—
They from to-day and from to-night
Expected nothing more,
Then yesterday and yesternight
Had proffered them before.

To them was life a simple art
Of duties to be done,
A game where each man took his part,
A race where all must run;
A battle whose great scheme and scope
They little cared to know,
Content, as men at arms, to cope
Each with his fronting foe.

Man now his Virtue's diadem
Puts on and proudly wears,
Great thoughts, great feelings, came to them,
Like instincts, unawares:
Blending their souls' sublimest needs
With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
As noble boys at play.—

And what if Nature's fearful wound
They did not probe and bare,
For that their spirits never swooned
To watch the misery there,—
For that their love but flowed more fast,
Their charities more free,
Not conscious what mere drops they cast
Into the evil sea.

A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet,
It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet:
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire,—
Our hearts must die, except they breathe
The air of fresh Desire.

But, Brothers, who up Reason's hill
Advance with hopeful cheer,—
O ! loiter not, those heights are chill,
As chill as they are clear ;
And still restrain your haughty gaze,
The loftier that ye go,
Remembe'ring distance leaves a haze
On all that lies below.

THE WORTH OF HOURS.

—•—

Believe not that your inner eye
Can ever in just measure try
The worth of Hours as they go by:

For every man's weak self, alas!
Makes him to see them, while they pass,
As through a dim or tinted glass:

But if in earnest care you would
Mete out to each its part of good,
Trust rather to your after-mood.

Those surely are not fairly spent,
That leave your spirit bowed and bent
In sad unrest and ill-content:

And more,—though, free from seeming harm,
You rest from toil of mind or arm,
Or slow retire from Pleasure's charm,—

If then a painful sense comes on
Of something wholly lost and gone,
Vainly enjoyed, or vainly done,—

Of something from your being's chain
Broke off, nor to be linkt again
By all mere Memory can retain,—

Upon your heart this truth may rise,—
Nothing that altogether dies
Suffices Man's just destinies:

So should we live, that every Hour
May die as dies the natural flower,—
A self-reviving thing of power;

That every Thought and every Deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future meed;

Esteeming Sorrow, whose employ
Is to develope, not destroy,
Far better than a barren Joy.

THE LONG-AGO.

Eyes which can but ill define
Shapes that rise about and near,
Through the far horizon's line
Stretch a vision free and clear:
Memories feeble to retrace
Yesterday's immediate flow,
Find a dear familiar face
In each hour of Long-ago.

Follow yon majestic train
Down the slopes of old renown,
Knightly forms without disdain,
Sainted heads without a frown;
Emperors of thought and hand
Congregate, a glorious show,
Met from every age and land
In the plains of Long-ago.

As the heart of childhood brings
Something of eternal joy,
From its own unsounded springs,
Such as life can scarce destroy;
So, remindful of the prime
Spirits, wande'ring to and fro,
Rest upon the resting time
In the peace of Long-ago.

Youthful Hope's religious fire,
When it burns no longer, leaves
Ashes of impure Desire
On the altars it deceives;
But the light that fills the Past
Sheds a still diviner glow,
Ever farther it is cast
O'er the scenes of Long-ago.

Many a growth of pain and care,
Cumbe'ring all the present hour,
Yields, when once transplanted there,
Healthy fruit or pleasant flower;
Thoughts that hardly flourish here,
Feelings long have ceased to blow,
Breathe a native atmosphere
In the world of Long-ago.

On that deep-retiring shore
Frequent pearls of beauty lie,
Where the passion-waves of yore
Fiercely beat and mounted high:
Sorrows that are sorrows still
Lose the bitter taste of woe;
Nothing's altogether ill
In the griefs of Long-ago.

Tombs where lonely love repines,
Ghastly tenements of tears,
Wear the look of happy shrines
Thro' the golden mist of years:
Death, to those who trust in good,
Vindicates his hardest blow;
Oh! we would not, if we could,
Wake the sleep of Long-ago!

Tho' the doom of swift decay
Shocks the soul where life is strong,
Tho' for frailer hearts the day
Lingers sad and overlong,—
Still the weight will find a leaven,
Still the spoiler's hand is slow,
While the Future has its Heaven,
And the Past its Long-ago.

SIMPLE SOUNDS.

O Power, whose organ is the tremu'lous air,
Thou that not only to the' accordant sense
Unfoldest all a world of harsh and fair,
But hast a far diviner influence,
Submitting to inscrutable control
The finest elements of human soul;

O mystic Sound! what heart can keep aloof,
If summoned to acknowledge thy bland sway,
As thou approachest in the golden woof
Of luscious harmonies serene or gay?
But thou hast moods I would not honor less,
Thy simplest forms of moral kingliness.

How did my childish ecstasy burst out,
When first I found thy Echoes at my call!
What blithe caprice of whisper, song, and shout,
Woke the steep hill and challenged the long wall!
How we *did* laugh! I needed from that day
Nor other playfellows nor other play.

Further in life, when thoughts and feelings slept
In my heart's tomb, some one particu'lar tone
Of common bells has stung me till I wept,
And rusht away, opprest by things foregone;
For though the hours recalled be bright and glad,
Still earnest memory ever will be sad.

When late I changed the still unpeopled air
Of the clear South for this my mother clime,
I quivered with delight, as every where
Sweet birds in happy snatches hailed the prime;
A throstle's twitter made old walks arise,
With lilac bunches dancing in my eyes.

What love we, about those we love the best,
Better than their dear voices? At what cost
Would one not gather to an aching breast
Each little word of some whom we have lost?

And oh! how blank to hear, in some far place,
A voice we know, and see a stranger's face.

I never hold my truth to God more leal
Than when it thunders; that monoto'nous roll
Has after-lightning potent to reveal
Many dark words on Faith's sin-shaded scroll:
Talk with a stormy sky, man! prone to deem
That nothing *is*, because of thine own Dream.

And now within the hush of evening waves,
Cast by light force upon a shingly shore,
My Spirit rests; the ruins and fresh graves
That strewed its earthy path here vex no more:
Rockt on the soothing surge, its life is all
One soft attraction and one mellow fall.

LIGHT.

FROM COUNT PLATEN.

Light from Heaven downward beameth,
Light to Heaven upward streameth ;

Light, the symbol Mediator,
Between Creature and Creator.

There was Light, before the Sun
Or the Earth their lives begun ;

And thus the perfect Light of Deity
Became Creation's parent-mystery.

Ever wider, ever lighter,
The holy shafts of Light are cast;
Ahriman himself, the Dark One,
Will be merged in light at last.

MUTABILITY.

I saw two children intertwine
Their arms about each other,
Like the lithe tendrils of a vine
Around its nearest brother:
And ever and anon,
As gaily they ran on,
Each lookt into the other's face,
Anticipating an embrace.—
I markt those two, when they were men,
I watcht them meet one day,
They toucht each other's hands, and then
Each went on his own way;
There did not seem a tie
Of love, the lightest chain,
To make them turn a linge'ring eye,
Or press the hand again.

This is a page in our life's book,
We all of us turn over;
The web is rent,
The hour-glass spent,
And, oh! the path we once forsook
How seldom we recover!

Our days are broken into parts,
And every fragment has a tale
Of the abandonment of hearts,
May make our freshest hopes turn pale;
Even in the plighting of our troth,
Even in the passion of our oath,
A cold hard voice may seem to mutter,
"We know not what it is we utter."

1828.

WINTER ROSES.

Ye Roses of November,
Ye are no joy to me;
The roses I remember
Are other than ye be!
Your cordial kindred summer
Has gone by long before,
And Winter, the new-comer,
Is' a Lover fierce and frore.

At sight of ye I tremble,
As ye in this bleak air;
I read a fearful symbol
In what ye are and were;
How all that's best and fairest,
When past a petty reign,
To those, who hold them dearest,
Are Pain and only Pain.

Beauty is always Beauty,
Her essences divine
The Poet, in his duty,
May labor to combine;
But Beauty wed to sorrow
Is sad, whate'er we say,—
Sad thinking for to-morrow,
Sad presence for to-day!

RETURNING DREAMS.

In the lone silence of my later nights,
The dreams I dreamt in youth come back to me;
Not a returning presence that affrights,—
Nor a mere play of hard-forced memory,—
But there is no reality which seems
To me so real as those repeated dreams.

I find, in such revivals of old joys,
An earnest of the unity that reigns
In this our inner life, an equipoise
To all our vacillating outward pains;
A constant well, from which our souls updraw
Continuous Truth and undisturbèd Law.

If few to us, and far between, appear
The favored hours at which reverberate
These spiritual echoes, that from sphere
To sphere are sped by Power compassionate,
In Life's short pass, how rarely are we found
Just at the point where strikes the heavenly sound !

But unlike echoes among natural things,
That live in faintness and are breathed away,—
To ends most distant their reflection brings
Glories and bliss impervious to decay,
Fresh and refreshing as when first they come
From the Eternal Thought, which is their home.

As in that World of Dream, whose mystic shades
Are cast by still more mystic substances,
We ofttimes have an unreflecting sense,
A silent consciousness, of some things past,
So clear, that we can wholly comprehend
Others of which they are a part, and even
Continue them in action, though no stretch

Of after-memory can recognise
That we have had experience of those things,
Or sleeping or awake;—
Thus in the dream,
Our Universal Dream, of Mortal Life,
The incidents of an anterior Dream,
Or, it may be, Existence (for the Sun
Of Being, seen thro' the deep dreamy mist,
Itself is dream-like), noiselessly intrude
Into the daily flow of earthly things;
Instincts of Good,—immediate sympathies,
Places come at by chance, that claim at once
An old acquaintance,—single, random, looks,
That bare a stranger's bosom to our eyes;
We *know* these things are so, we ask not why,
But act and follow as the Dream goes on.

Happy the many to whom Life displays
Only the flaunting of its Tulip-flower,
Whose minds have never bent to scrutinize
Into the madde'ning riddle of the Root,—
Shell within shell,—dream folded over dream,—
No heart, no kernel of essential Being,
For us to find, and feel that Truth is there!

THE MARVEL OF LIFE.

O Life! how like the common-breathèd air,
Which is thy outward instrument, thou liest
Ever about us, with sustaining force,
In the calm current of our usual days
Unfelt, unthought of; nay, how dense a croud
Float on upborne by thy prolific stream,
Eve'n to the ridges of the' eternal sea,
Spending profuse the passion of their mind
On every flower that gleams on either bank,
On every rock that bends its rugged brow,
Conscious of all things, only not of thee.
Yet some there are, who in their greenest youth,
At some rare hours, have known the dazzling light
Intolerable, that glares upon the soul,
In the mere sense of Being, and grown faint

With awe, and strive'n to press their folded hands
Upon their inner eyes, and bowed their heads,
As in the presence of a mighty Ghost,
Which they must feel, but cannot dare to see.
It is before me now, that fearful truth,
That single solitary truth, which hangs
In the dark heaven of our uncertainties,
Seen by no other light than its own fire,
Self-balanced, like the Arab Magian's tomb,
Between the inner and the outer World;—
How utterly the wretched shred of Time,
Which in our blindness we call Human Life,
Is lost with all its train of circumstance,
And appanage of after and before,
In this eternal present; that we Are!
No When,—no Where,—no How,—but that we Are,—
And nought besides;—Nor when our dazèd sight,
Weaned from its first keen wonder, learns to fix
The surer and more reasonable gaze
Of calm concentrated philosophy
On this intense idea, have we gained
One instant's raising of the sacred veil,
One briefest glimpse into the sanctuary.—
We grasp at words, and find them meaningless,
Bind thoughts together that will not be bound,

But burst asunder at the very time
We hold them closest,—find we are awake
The while we seem to dream, and find we dream
The while we seem to be the most awake;
And thus we are thrown on from sea to sea.
Can we take up the sparkles of choice light,
That dance upon the ruffled summer waters,
And make them up to one coherent sun?
Can we transform the charred and molten dust
Into its elemental diamond?
And, tho' thus impotent, we yet dare hope,
From this embasèd form, half earth, half heaven,
Of most imperfect fragmentary nature,
These scant materials of dethronèd power,
This tarnisht Beauty, marred Divinity,
To fabricate a comprehensive scheme
Of absolute Existence—to lay open
The knowledge of a clear concordant Whole,
And penetrate, with foully-scalèd eyes,
The total scope, and utmost distances,
Of the Creations of the Living God.

* * * * *

* * * * *

He was a bitter Mocker, that old Man
Who bade us "know ourselves," yet not unwise;
For though the science of our Life and Being
Be unattained and unattainable
By these weak organs, though the athlete mind,
Hardened by practice of unpausing toil,
And fed to manhood with robustest meats,
Never can train its sinews strong enough
To raise itself from off the solid ground,
To which the mandate of creating Will
Has bound it; though we all must patient stand,
Like statues on appointed pedestals,
Yet we may choose (since choice is given) to shun
Servile contentment or ignoble fear,
In the expression of our attitude;
And with far-straining eyes, and hands upcast,
And feet half raised, declare our painful state,
Yearning for wings to reach the fields of Truth,
Mourning for wisdom, panting to be free.

HAPPINESS.

Because the Few with signal virtue crowned,
The heights and pinnacles of human mind,
Sadder and wearier than the rest are found,
Wish not thy Soul less wise or less refined.
True that the small delights which every day
Cheer and distract the pilgrim are not theirs;
True that, though free from Passion's lawless sway,
A loftier being brings severer cares.
Yet have they special pleasures, even mirth,
By those undreamt of who have only trod
Life's valley smooth; and if the rolling earth
To their nice ear have many' a painful tone,
They know, Man does not live by Joy alone,
But by the presence of the power of God.

THE SAME.

A SPLENDOR amid glooms, a sunny thread
Woven into a tapestry of cloud,—
A merry child a-playing with the shroud
That lies upon a breathless mother's bed,—
A garland on the front of one new-wed,
Trembling and weeping while her troth is vowed,—
A school-boy's laugh that rises light and loud
In licensed freedom from ungentle dread;
These are ensamples of the Happiness,
For which our nature fits us; more and less
Are parts of all things to the mortal given,
Of Love, Joy, Truth, and Beauty. Perfect Light
Would dazzle, not illuminate, our sight,—
From Earth it is enough to glimpse at Heaven.

TO AN ENGLISH LADY,

WHO HAD SUNG A ROMAN BALLAD.

Blame not my vacant looks ; it is not true,
That my discourteous thoughts did vainly stray
Out of the presence of your gentle lay,
While other eager liste'ners nearer drew,
Though sooth I hardly heard a note ; for you,
Most cunning songstress, did my soul convey
Over the fields of space, far, far away,
To the dear garden-land, where long it grew.
Thus, all that time, beneath the ilex roof
Of an old Alban hill, I lay aloof,
With the cicala faintly clitte'ring near,
Till, as your song expired, the clouds that pass
Athwart the Roman plain, as o'er a glass,
Thickened, and bade the Vision disappear.

ON REVISITING CAMBRIDGE,

AFTER A LONG ABSENCE ON THE CONTINENT.

—•—

Nor few, nor poor in beauty, my resorts
In forein climes,—nor negligent or dull
My observation, but these long-left courts
I still find beautiful, most beautiful!
And fairly are they more so than before;
For to my eye, fresh from a southern land,
They wear the colo'ring of the scenes of yore,
And the old faith that made them here to stand.
I paint the very students as they were,
Not the men-children of these forward days,
But mild-eyed boys just risen from their knees,
While, proud as angels of their holy care,
Following the symbol-vested priest, they raise
The full response of antique litanies.

THE SAME.

I HAVE a debt of my heart's own to Thee,
School of my Soul, old lime and cloister shade,
Which I, strange creditor, should grieve to see
Fully acquitted and exactly paid.
The first ripe taste of manhood's best delights,
Knowledge imbibed, while mind and heart agree,
In sweet belated talk on winter nights,
With friends whom growing time keeps dear to me,—
Such things I owe thee, and not only these:
I owe thee the far beaco'ning memories
Of the young dead, who, having crost the tide
Of Life where it was narrow, deep, and clear,
Now cast their brightness from the further side
On the dark-flowing hours I breast in fear.

ON COWPER'S GARDEN AT OLNEY.

From this forlornest place, at morn and even,
Issues a voice imperative, "Begone,
All ye that let your vermin thoughts creep on
Beneath the' unheeded thunders of high Heaven;
Nor welcome they, who, when free grace is given
To flee from usual life's dominion,
Soon as the moving scene or time is gone,
Return, like penitents unfitly shriven.
But ye who long have wooed the memory
Of this great Victim of sublime despair,
Encompast round with evil as with air,
Yet crying, God is good, and sinful he,—
Remain, and feel how better 'tis to drink
Of Truth to Madness ev'n than shun that fountain's brink."

TO QUEEN VICTORIA,

ON A PUBLIC CELEBRATION.

How art Thou calm amid the storm, young Queen!
Amid this wide and joy-distracted throng?
Where has the range of life-experience been
To keep thy heart thus equable and strong?
Can the secluded cold which may belong
To such high state compose thy noble mien,
Without the duteous purpose not to wrong
The truth of some Ideal spirit-seen?

Perchance the depth of what I boldly askt
None know—nor I, nor Thou.
Yet let us pray
That Thou, in this exceeding glory maskt,
Be not to loss of thy true self beguiled;
Still able at thy Maker's feet to lay
The living, loving, nature of a child!

THE GRECIAN YOUTH*.

There was a youth, who had drunk deep of lore,
And loved Religion, Truth, and Poesy,
And to that triune power had bent the knee,
Humble in wisdom,—happy to adore;
That blessed Youth the mystic Spirit bore
To Sais, its especial sanctuary;
He raised the veil, but what he there did see
None know; tho' now he was not as before;
There was a lighted beauty on his brow,
And on his lips a calm contented smile;—
On earth he sojourned but a little while,
And the world called him madman in her scoff;
Mad too he was, if madness it can show,
To live the Spirit's life—nor shake the body off.

* For the development of this idea on the other and darker side, see "Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais" of Schiller.

ON ALFRED OF ENGLAND.

Alfred judged, and we have his own words before us grounded on such judgment, that it is better to permit the continuance of a defective law, than to destroy the foundation upon which all laws depend,—respect for established authority,—which sudden changes, even for the better, are apt to undermine.

PALGRAVE.

THERE rose, from out a most discordant age,
A mind attuned to that slow harmony,
With which the Former of Humanity
Unfolds his book of will, from page to page.
War, with that gene'rous passion, he did wage,
Which was the soul of Christian chivalry,—
But *governing*, his wise humility
Against high Heaven threw down no ventu'rous gage.
He knew, how staidly moves the Spi'rit of Law,
Even as the dial-shade,—that men with awe
May recognise the one law-giving hand;
And thus the Ruler, whom his own proud will
Urges unbridled, be' it for good or ill,
Brings on himself like shame, and misery on the land.

TO WILLIAM PENN.

"In a large room," thy Spirit's feet were set*,
In space which is not space, illimitable,—
Living the Life which is ineffable,
Being a Feeling, not a Thought; while yet
Bound to the body, in the rack and fret,
Turmoil and striving, Thou wert capable
Of rendering great ideas palpable,
In actual forms, which men can ne'er forget.
Thus did'st Thou live Religion,—thus the scroll
Of God, the visible Bible, was unfurled
Before Thee, while the Sun of Deity glowed,
And all the shapes of Truth, reflected, showed,
On the immacu'late tablet of thy soul,
Through the "dark chamber" of this dismal world†.

* Psalm, xxxi. 9.

† Camera Oscura.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

—•—

Thee I would think one of the many Wise,
Who in Eliza's time sat eminent,
To our now world, his Purgatory, sent
To teach us what true English Poets prize.
Pasquilant froth and forein galliardize
Are none of thine; but, when of gay intent,
Thou usest staid old English merriment,
Mannerly mirth, which no one dare despise.
The scoffs and girds of our poor critic rout
Must move thy pity, as amidst their mime,
Monk of Truth's Order, from thy memories
Thou dost updraw sublime simplicities,
Grand Thoughts that never can be wearied out,
Showing the unreality of Time.

TO A CERTAIN POET.

—•—

At Beauty's altar fervent acolyte,
And favored candidate for priestly name,
In object as in force adore aright,
Nor waste one breath of thy rare gift of flame;
Nature, Artistic Form, Music,—all these
Are shapes where partial Beauty deigns to lie,
And mediate, as with types and images,
Between frail hearts and perfect Deity.
From Thee a purer faith is due,—to find
The Beauty' of Life,—the Melody of Mind,—
Which the true Poet's quest never eludes:
Speed Thou Philosophy's straight-onward flight,
Aiming thy wings at that serenest height,
Where Wordsworth stands, feeding the multitudes.

FROM GÖTHE.

—•—

Demand not by what road or portal
Into God's City thou art come;
But where thou tak'st thy place as mortal,
Remain in peace, and make thy home.

Then look around thee for the Wise;
Look for the Strong, who there command;—
Let Wisdom teach thee what to prize;
Let Power direct and brace thy hand.

If, doing all that should be done,
Faithful and calm the State approve thee,
Know, thou wilt gain the hate of none,
And many will rejoice to love thee.

Honor the greeting of a stranger's hand!
Prize it, as if it were an antient friend's:
Though, after some short words, you say, Farewell!
You going East, he West,—path facing path,—
Yet, after many years, at some strange hour,
If your ways cross, you cry, with sudden joy,
"Yes—it is he! 'Twas there we met;"—as if
So many a toilsome day o'er land and sea,
So many an orbit of the' unresting Earth,
That time and this had never lain between.

Then talk with fair exchange, share all your gains,
And let old sympathies be wove anew:
The first fresh greeting's worth a thousand others;
So meet all greetings with a kind return.

FROM THE "BOOK OF SAYINGS,"

IN GÖTHE'S "WEST-EASTERN DIVAN."

To one, who in most evil days is born,
All better days will be for grief or scorn.

Why lapse my hours so wearily away?
Life may be short, but, oh! how long the day!
Still onward yearns the heart, still strives to go;
An' it be heaven-ward, who can rightly know?
But forward, forward, is its ceaseless range,
As if it wisht its very self to change;
And then to some best-loved one's breast it flies,
And rests in unreflecting Paradise,
Till the life-whirlpool drives it forth again,
At one sad point, one only to remain,—
When, all desire, all disappointment, past,
It leaves the struggle, self-befooled at last.

If I am to show you this neighbourhood,
You must mount these steps for the view to be good.

He who holds a double mind
Will have his Conscience poorly kept;
A house with two of womankind
Will never be so nicely swept.

My lot on Earth, how grand! how fair a soil,
Time my Possession,—Time my Field of toil.

If you would not be robbed of each whit of your pelf,
Keep your gold, and your path, and your faith to yourself.

Be it your unerring rule
Ne'er to contradict a fool;
For if Folly dare but brave you,
All your Wisdom cannot save you.

Ye Fools, esteeming in your proper fate
Some special meaning,—what are You or I?
If Islam to One God be consecrate,
Parts of One Islam must we live and die.

For what am I most thankful, when at Prayer?
That Allah parts our Knowledge and our Woes:
Would not each patient utterly despair,
Knew he his ill as the Physician knows?

The silent man for all the world need never care a feather,
The Man beneath the covert Tongue is hidden altogether.

How could you behave in so careless a way,
When Fortune came into your house the' other day?
I don't think the Lady could take it *so* ill,
For she's been often since of her own free will.

Many a light the Orient throws
O'er the midland waters brought?
He alone who Hafiz knows,
Knows what Calderon has thought.

On the immoveable enduring land,
The tide of Passion vents its rage in vain;
With pearls of poesy it sows the strand,
And this for Life is surely glorious gain.

All who have strive'n to earn a Hero's fame
Must with delight a Hero praise and name;
He, who the heats and chills of Life has known,
Can know the worth of Man—and he alone.

Writing, rhyming, night and day.
That this displeases me, is true;
Who chase all Poetry away
From our poor Earth?—You, Poets, you.

THE WEARY SOUL.

My soul is wasted with trouble and toil,
The evening of Life is damp and chill,—
She would go back and rest awhile,
She can go back whene'er she will,—
For' the Poet holds the Past in fee,
That shadowy land is all his own,
And He, not led by Memory,
But as a man that walks alone
In gardens long familiar, knows
What spots afford the best repose.

Surely she will not wander far,—
Twilight is coming with never a star;
Why may she not return where stands,
Broadly towards the weste'ring sun,
That proud building of hearts and hands,
Castle and Palace all in one,

Over the portal named at length,
"Successful Manhood's place of strength?"
There she may traverse court and hall,
Up to her favo'rite turret tall;
She may recline her aching head
On her ancestral purple bed,
There, where at eve so oft she lay,
I' the deep-embrasured window-bay,
Giving her vision open reign
Over the chequered world of plain—
Of hues that rest and hues that pass,
Sunset and autumn and tinted glass;
While the buck's clear bell and the cattle's low,
And every sound that is loud below,
Were melted into one murmur soft
Ere they could reach that couch aloft.

Witness of that triumphant scene!
Little you know what doom has been:—
How at a blow the heavens were split,
Words on the wall spontaneous writ,
As with a pen of burning brass,
"Vanitas, omnia Vanitas:"—
How Disappointment bared her hand,
Vivid and red as the levin brand,

Struck on the tower's sublimest crown,
Shattered the sturdiest buttress down,—
Till the poor Soul would fain have died
'Mid her annihilated pride.
Speed her along, tho' night be drear,—
Night be her cover, for none is here;
Seek her a rest where'er you may,
Not in this shelterless decay!

There is a bower, a way-side bower,
Rich with brede of berry' and flower,—
Fair to dwell in and behold
How the green is turning gold,
Till the leafy screen repeat
All the light without the heat:
Music comes not here and there,
Does not fill, but is, the air:
Perfumes delicate and fine,
Flower of orange, flower of vine,
Take their place, without pretence,
In the harmony of sense;
Where the floating spirit dreams,
Fed by odours, sounds, and gleams,
Of this royal region hight,
"Youth's dominion of delight."

Why then farther? why not here?
Soul of sorrow, Mind of fear!
Rest, as thou wert wont to rest,
On the swell of Nature's breast.
Hear that voice in angel's frame,
Singing, "Youth is still the same;
Cheery faces glimpsing round,—
Limber feet on mossy ground;—
Circumstance, the God of clay,
We have fairly laught away,
And a power of other face,
Hope, is seated in his place.
Enter, all that come from far,
Poor and naked as ye are;
Very breath is here divine,—
Bacchus has no need of wine!"

"Friends!" the tearful soul replies,
"Keep, oh! keep your Paradise!
Once I gained your happy place,
Ardent in the healthy race,
One of many braced together,
Comrades of the way and weather;
Now alone I falter by,—
Youth's the same,—but what am I?

Just as sweet, as free from cares,
Are your smiles,—but are not *theirs:*
When the lips I prest of old
Lie beneath the sullen mould;
When the voices I have known
In hosannas like your own
Answer to my yearning call,
Thin and feeble, if at all;
When the golden locks are grey,
That made sunshine all my day;
When my fibres fall together
In your genial summer-weather;—
How can I repose an hour
In the graces of your bower?
How should I take up my rest,
As a strange unnatu'ral guest,
In this home of truth, in this
My retreat of ancient bliss?
Blasts of death-impregnate air
Would, with all the flowers, be there,—
Storms thro' all the blue be spread
In thick battalia o'er my head;
Pallid looks of friendships broken,
Phantom words unwisely spoken,

Thoughts of love and self-reproof
Mingled in a fearful woof,—
Wishes, when not wisht in vain,
Only realised for pain,—
Things ye could not hear or see
Would be all my company!"

Disheartened spirit! thou art then
In vain distinct from common men,
If all thy weary quest of mind
No true abiding-place can find,
Whose charms the busy life subdue,
And lure it from the outer view!
No region of thy mortal lot
Where Peace is native to the spot,
Ready to greet, when care-begone,
Imagination's pilgrim son.

Yet onward;—it is well to stray
Along this bleak and homeless way,
Till thou canst raise thy conscious eyes
Where Childhood's Atalantis lies,
And recognise that idyl scene,
Where all mild creatures, void of awe,
Amid field-flowers and mountains green,
Fulfil their being's gentle law.

They will not fear thee; safe they dwell
Within this armless citadel,
Embastioned in the self-defence
Of self-regardless innocence:
On Sin or Sorrow's bosom lingers
Each infant head in slumbers bland,—
Secure the tender tiny fingers
Enclasp the dark and withered hand.

Abysms of thought and sense must be
Between those simple souls and thee;
But as the parent is beguiled
Into the nature of the child,
So mayst thou, tho' an alien here,
By careful duty take thy part
In all the feelings that endear
The kingdom of the virgin heart.

And thou wilt taste once more the rills
Fresh gushing from the' eternal hills,
And feel delight in living air
Without research of when and where;
And hear the birds their song dispense
With free descant, on branch and wing,
Careless of other audience
Than God who made and bade them sing.

Till haply pausing some noon-day
Amid the faery people's play,
Along thy limbs the stony sleep
That rounds our life shall calmly creep,
And thou from Present and from Past
And things to come at once be freed,
To rest for aye, or wake at last
In God's own arms, a child indeed.

THE COMBAT OF LIFE.

Ce n'est pas la victoire qui fait le bonheur des nobles cœurs,—c'est le combat.

MONTALEMBERT.

We have come out upon the field of Life,
To war with Evil; by some mightier power
Than Memory can embrace, or Reason know,
We were enlisted into this great strife,
And led to meet that unknown Enemy:
Yet not like men brought blinded to a wood,
Who, looking round them, where a hundred paths
All undistinguisht lead a hundred ways,
Tormented by that blank indifference,
Rather sit down and die than wander on,—
Not thus, but with a tablet clear and sure,
(Obscure in this alone, that it is graven
On mortal hearts by an eternal hand),
An ever-present Law, within our Being,

Which we must read whether we will or no,
We are placed here and told the way to go.
The Boy, who feels his foot upon the plain,
And his young fingers clinging to the sword,
For the first time—how loudly he proclaims
The faith of his ingenuous chivalry!
"What is to me that proudly-fronting force?
Am I not brave and strong? Am I not here
To fight and conquer? Have I not around
A world of comrades, bound to the same cause,
All brave as I—all led by the same chief,
All pledged to Victory? Who dares to fear?
Who dares to doubt? Is not the very pulse,
That drives my spirit onward, as a Voice
Hailing my glory?—Yes, the Power of Ill
Shall quail before the virtue of my arm,
And hostile darts fall pointless from my shield."
Poor youthful Heart! poor noble Self-deceit!
Weak-winged Aspirant!—Step with me aside,
'Tis for a moment,—mount this little hill,—
Tell me and tell thyself what see'st Thou now.
Look East and West, and mark how far extends
This vainly mockt, this haughtily defied,
This Might so easily to be laid low!
There is no eminence on this wide space,

So high that thou from it canst e'er behold
A clear horizon: dark is all the space,
Black with the masses of that Enemy;
There is no point where Light can penetrate
Those densely-banded Legions,—the green plain
Shines through no interval. Brave though thou art,
My Boy, where is thy trust in Victo'ry now!
Now gaze below, gaze on that waving crowd,
The marshalled army of Humanity,
From which thou art come out,—Loyal thou art,
My Boy; but what avails thy feeble Truth,
When, as thou see'st, of the huge multitude,
The still succeeding myriads there arrayed
For fight, how few, how miserably few,
Not only do not fervently work out
Their Soldier-duty, but whose craven souls
Do not pass over to the very Foe,
And, mingling with his numbers numberless,
Against their brethren turn unnatu'ral arms,—
Or else of honest wills at first, like thine,
After the faint resistance of an hour,
Yield themselves up half-willing prisoners,
Soon to be won by golden-guileful tongues,
To do blithe service in the cause of Sin?
Surely amid this general faithlessness,

This common treason, where Desertion takes
So sure a method, so distinct a form,
That it may rather seem itself a Law
Than the infraction, where the wonder is
That those are loyal, not that these rebel,—
Surely if *we*, who have our hearts awake
To this most dreadful Truth, we who have learnt
That Evil is a force, which when we meet
In open battle, we are as a rush
Before the whirlwind, cautiously retire
To some deep-hidden cleft where'er we deem
We are best sheltered from his poisoned touch,
And there in calm but tearful hopelessness,
Mourning the cureless Ago'ny of our world,
Crouch in the dust and wait until the end,
It were a bitter judgment and untrue,
To brand us cowards, and our deeds a crime.
But though the weakness of our human heart
May thus be made most safe and innocent,
Yet there are some to whom a strength is given,
A Will, a self-constraining Energy,
A Faith which feeds upon no earthly hope,
Which never thinks of Victo'ry, but content
In its own consummation, combatting
Because it ought to combat (even as Love

Is its own cause and cannot have another),
And conscious that to find in martyrdom
The stamp and signet of most perfect life
Is all the science that mankind can reach,
Rejoicing fights, and still rejoicing falls.
It may be that to Spirits high-toned as these
A revelation of the end of Time
Is also granted; that they feel a sense
Giving them firm assurance, that the foe
By which they must be crusht (in Death well-won
Alone to find their freedom) in his turn
Will be subdued, though not by such as They.
Evil, which is the King of Time, in Time
Cannot be overcome, but who has said
That Time shall be for ever? Who can lay
The limits of Creation? Who can know
That Realm and Monarch shall not sink together
Into the deep of blest Eternity,
And Love and Peace be all the Universe?

Her heart is sick with thinking,
O' the misery of her kind,
Her mind is almost sinking,
That once so buoyant mind ;—
She cannot look before her
On the' evil-haunted way,—
Uphold her, oh ! restore her
Thou Lord of Night and Day !—
She cries, " These things confound me,
They settle on my brain,
The very air around me
Is universal Pain.
The earth is damp with weeping,
Rarely the sun shines clear
On any but those sleeping
Upon the quiet bier.

I envy not hard hearts, but yet
I would I could *sometimes* forget;
I would, tho' but for moments, look
With comfort into Nature's book,
Nor read that everlasting frown,
Whose terror bows me wholly down.
I cannot meet each pang I see
With gratefulness that not on *me*
Has fallen that rod,
And make my fellow's agony
The measure of my love to God.
I bear an earnest Christian faith;
I never shrunk at thought of death;
I know the raptu'rous light of Heaven,
To man's unscalèd vision given;—
My spirit is not blind; but when
The tortures of my brother men,
The famine of gray hairs,
The sick-beds of the poor,
Life's daily stinging cares
That croud the proudest door,
The tombs of the long-loved,
The slowly-broken heart,
Self-gloated power unmoved
By Pity's tende'rest art,

Come thronging thick about me,
Close in the world without me,—
How should I not despond?
How can I stretch my sight so far
As where things blest and holy are?
My mortal nature is too frail
To penetrate the sable veil,—
I cannot *see* beyond!"

THE PAST.

—•—

The Past—the Past!—it has a tolling sound,
That solemn syllable, which calls to mind
The prison of the Present rising round,
And all the bonds that Time has power to bind.

Sounds, sights,—all else the means of sense impart,—
Seem to arouse to grief or joy in vain,
While still it clanks upon the captive heart,
That ever-moving, never-lengthe'ning, chain.

Is there no art that can an echo make,
To mock the splendid harmonies gone by?
No charm that can the long-dead hours awake,
In ghost-like silence and solemnity?

Alas! tho' Memory, with her wilful wand,
Can shadow forth a faint and vapid show,
What boots the colorless unmeaning band?
'Tis but a dream,—we know it to be so.

Of all our spiritual elements—of all
Those powers by which we feel ourselves to be—
Is there not *one* that can elude the thrall,
True to itself, and as its Author free?

Have we no heritage of Father-land?
No ray immortal as the Parent Sun?
No heaven-armed force, that can undaunted stand
Guarding its own eternal garrison?

Yes, we have that which lives a deathless life,
No meagre phantom, spawned by human will,
But strong to meet the Tyrant in the strife;
Time has no rule o'er what he cannot kill.

The feelings which the Heart has raised to birth,
That holy mother never will disclaim;
She is no hireling minister of earth;
They are no bastard forgers of her name.

Memorial flashes, transient as intense,
A spirit darting through material night,
Like lightning felt within the vivid sense,
Yet seeming all too rapid for the sight.

How we have joyed, when all our mind was joy,
How we have loved, when love was all our law,
Lookt with half envy on the rising boy,
And thought of manhood with religious awe.

How we delighted in a thrice-sung song,
A wilding's blossom, or a speckled stone,
And how we numbered o'er the starry throng,
And chose the brightest to be called our own.

Or, when young Passion to excess had ranged,
How conscience met it with her sacred string,
And how we marvelled, what to frowns had changed
The red-rose smiles that tinted every thing.

How, when at first upon the fatal shore,
Liste'ning the murmu'rings of the waves of sin,
A shive'ring chill came over us, before
We bared our tender limbs and glided in.

And when perchance some random bird obscene
Flew screaming by, and warned us where we stood,
With palsied feet, we turned us back to lean,
Resisting those who urged us to the flood.

Such thoughts can never die; the fire once kindled
Lies smoulde'ring in the ashes dusty cove;
Tho' one by one the tremu'lous sparks have dwindled,
A flame will burst in times we wot not of.

THE WORLD'S EXILE.

Well, I will tell you, kind adviser,
Why thus I ever roam
In distant lands, nor wish to guide
My footsteps to the fair hill-side
Where stands my sacred home.

My home! I seem to write that word,
In characters more clear
Than other words,—more slowly round
I draw my pen, to keep the sound
Still linge'ring in my ear.

For were my wearied life allowed
To choose that quiet bourne,
I should be met by straining eyes,
Welcoming tears, and grateful sighs,
To hallow my return.

But between me and that blest place,
There lies a bar, I feel,
More hard to pass, more girt with awe,
Than any power of injured law,
Or front of bristling steel,—

Or the proud world's anathema,
Or high imperial ban;
I know it would be sacrilege
For me to touch that threshold's edge,—
I am an unclean man!

Not that, in things of Man's esteem,
I bear a mark of shame,
Wealth fairly won, and never turned
To sordid use or wrong, has earned
My honorable name.

But where has been my walk of life?
Have I not grown half grey
Within the lazar house, and there
Have fed upon the' envenomed air,
Unconscious day by day?

How long ago the poiso'nous rain
Distilled its deadly cold,
Upon my warm and panting youth,
That had no instinct but for truth,
No thought of self or gold!

How the hard leprous scales defiled
The bloom so fresh before,
How soon they taught my virgin eyes
To' unlearn the glorious mysteries
They saw so clear of yore!

And in their place came vexèd thoughts,
And hopes without a goal,
Unjust regards, and false esteems,
And worship of fantastic dreams,
To paralyse my soul.

Perchance, if I were placed once more
Within the antient pale
Of Home and homely things, once more
Beheld beside the rustic door
The bowery rose down-trail,—

And saw the bed at whose low side
I prayed, a thankful boy,
Where I have read, by stealthy light,
Some marve'llous tale, till past midnight,
In deep and trembling joy;

The casement too, with light wood latch,
Where 'twas my happy wont
To push the ivy half away,
And let the uncheckt moon-stream play
Over my thirsty front;

And when I felt a parent's kiss
Lie warm upon my cheek,—
Such sympathies so long foregone
Would make, in their sweet guerison,
The veriest savage meek.

The passion of that influence
Could not be vain to me,
The tide of love would be so strong,
I might perchance be borne along,
And be one moment free.

That could not last,—the mammon-King
Would be indeed too blind,
Thus to give up his long-won prey,
And loose the chains, in one short day,
It took him years to bind.

The heart, that with its luscious cates
The world has fed so long,
Could never taste the simple food
That gives fresh virtue to the good,
Fresh vigor to the strong.

What witche'ry, to a blunted spirit,
Can give the rapid sense
Of all that's true, and just, and kind,
And beautiful, that lights the mind
Of dauntless innocence?

The very health of these pure lives,
To my distempered sight,
Would wear a rude unseemly guise,—
Oh! shame that darkness dare despise
The Ministers of light!—

I could not join their honest mirth,
Nor share their artless plays,
Each earnest laugh would come to me,
Freited with bitte'rest mockery,
Out of my early days.

The plain old songs, all known by heart,
The merry-chorust round,
The' imperfect notes, that childhood sings
For its own glee, would now be things
Of faint and rapid sound.

The evening hymn, when every voice
After our father prayed,
Oldest with youngest richly blent,
Followed the simple instrument
My gentle Mother played.

That herald of their happy rest,
Closing their happy day,
Would chase from me all thought of sleep,—
Alas ! I might not even weep,
For' the bliss I' had thrown away.

But discontent and dark unrest
Would thicken all the air,
Envy, of thwarted conscience born,
Envy, that cloaks itself in scorn,
Would haunt me every where.

I might blaspheme the holy joys
From which my soul is riven,
And wroth to find my heart so dumb,
While theirs were sweetly-voiced, become
A Demon in that heaven.

At last, I feel, I might grow mad,
For my distorted brain
Would faint beneath the hideous rack—
Force me in ten-fold misery back
To the waste world again.

Then let me linger where I am,
An exile if you will,—
But, Friend, remember, if I flee
To my old home, I there must be
A greater exile still.

ON MY BOYISH LETTERS.

—→—

Look at the leaves I gather up in trembling,—
Little to see, and sere, and time-bewasted,
But they are other than the tree can bear now,
For they are mine!

Deep as the tumult in an archèd sea-cave,
Out of the Past these antiquated voices
Fall on my heart's ear; I must listen to them
For they are mine!

Whose is this hand that wheresoe'er it wanders,
Traces in light words thoughts that come as lightly?
Who was the king of all this soul-dominion?
I? Was it mine?

With what a healthful appetite of spirit,
Sits he at Life's inevitable banquet,
Tasting delight in every thing before him !
Could this be mine ?

See ! how he twists his coronals of fancy,
Out of all blossoms, knowing not the poison,—
How his young eye is mesht in the enchantment !
And it was mine !

What, is this I ?—this miserable complex,
Losing and gaining, only knit together
By the' ever-bursting fibres of remembrance,—
What is this mine ?

Surely we are by feeling as by knowing,—
Changing our hearts, our being changes with them ;
Take them away,—these spectres of my boyhood,
They are not mine.

They tell me I have won thy love,—
That if there be
One man most blest all men above,
Then I am he ;
I answer not, resolved no more
To linger here,
And they have bitter words in store
To taint thine ear.

Did they not mark me dread to speak
When thou wert by ?
Did they not watch my quivering cheek,
My streaming eye ?
And can they fable none the less
That I disdain
A gift, whose very preciousness
Is all my pain ?

'Tis true, that when that fatal hour
Did first disclose
The myste'ry of my willess power
O'er thy repose,
I felt it was the' ordainèd one
That tie to sever,
That only then it could be done,
For once and ever !

I shall not see thy motive grace
Before me play,
I shall not look upon thy face
One other day !
And yet I swear that I am free
From bond or vow ;
What stands betwixt my soul and thee ?
Oh ! ask not Thou.

Time was, when I too had my part
Of wealth divine,
A simple, free, and plastic heart
Almost like thine,
When lightened sorrow floated up
And died in tears,
And easy joy o'erflowed the cup
Of eighteen years.

If fate had then let cross our ways,
Thou wouldst have been
The Una of my nights and days,—
My spirit's Queen ;—
Thou wouldst have led me glad and pure
As thy white lamb ;
How dare I match this portraiture
With what I am ?

It seems to me, as if that time,
And I who wore
Its aspect of delight sublime,
Were nothing more
Than visions, which poetic sloth
So oft enjoys,—
As if the Scene and Man were both
Mere fancy's toys :

It may be that some help may come
To my soul's need,
My pilgrim thoughts may find a home
In some new creed ;
But thou, whose mind has never gone
One dream astray,—
Couldst thou be my companion,
That peri'lous way ?

Then I must check my words that flow
Too fast and far;
For worlds I would not thou shouldst know
How such things are!
Thou wilt not change, Thou wilt remain
Serene and sure,—
The touch of Time may well refrain
From thing so pure.

And now that I have closed the strife,
And view once more
My future of ungenial life
Spread out before,—
To have found favor in thy sight
Will still remain
A riv'er of thought, that full of light
Divides the plain.

THE CURSE OF LIFE.

All that flesh doth cover,
Souls of source sublime,
Are but slaves sold over
To the Master Time,
To work out their ransom for the antient crime.

Some go meet the morrow
With industrious will,—
Others toil in sorrow,
Though their hands be still;
Man must toil for good or he shall toil for ill.

Grasping at one pleasure,
We let others fall;
Yet how scant the measure
If we sum them all,—
Honey-drops scarce tasted in a sea of gall.

Did but tears and sighs
Teach our minds to see,
With clear-piercing eyes,
Into Heaven's decree,
By this time, how wise this world of ours would be!

Knowledge worn by sadness
Grows too faint to rise,—
Anguish fathers madness,—
Labor brutifies;
If high feelings live, the Man a Martyr dies.

Sleep of freshest childhood
Hears the voice of doom;—
Rambling in the wild wood,
Culling every bloom,
Tender brows are chilled by mist from out the tomb.

Gazing on Creation
With a first-love's eye,
Panting exaltation
Sinks into a sigh,—
For we learn so soon that what we love must die.

Then we try to smother
The Love-fire in our heart;
Nature, our sweet Mother,
Can no balm impart,
For she too is sick with all the self-same smart.

She would fain relieve us,
Fain our grief beguile,—
She cannot deceive us
By her outward smile,
For we know that Death torments her all the while.

In the green bud's bosom
There is secret pain,
Bees to the same blossom
Come not back again,—
Waters weep, that seem to sing a happy strain*.

The Gem of Love was shattered
Long before our birth,
Sparkles still are scattered
Over the broad Earth,—
Which some seek in vain, tho' some know not their worth.

* We know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.—St. Paul.

Some may find and hold them,
Never to let go,
Hearts that would enfold them
In their vital glow,—
When Circumstance comes in and works them double woe.

Circumstance, that ever
Uses wicked skill,
All fond ties to sever,
Bind them as we will,—
Till our broken Being in Death is husht and still.

THE BROTHERS.

'Tis true, that we can sometimes speak of Death,
Even of the Deaths of those we love the best,
Without dismay or terror; we can sit
In serious calm beneath deciduous trees,
And count the leaves, scarce heavier than the air,
That leave the branch and tremble to the ground;
Or out at midnight in a gliding boat
Enjoy the waning moon, and moralize,
And say that Death is but a Mediator
Between the lower and the loftier Life.
Thus it may be with those, who only know
The great Invader, as he sometimes comes
Dismantled of his full ferocity,
Taking almost a grace of gentleness
From the surrounding atmosphere of Love,
Seeming to pity what himself inflicts,

When with soft touch he draws away the chair
From the familiar circle, and lays down
The suffe'ring burden on an easy bed,
More like a weary traveller seeking sleep
Than the weak Victim of a Tyrant's will.
For then Affection has a thousand moods,
With which to sooth the black necessity,
And form his rigid features to a smile;—
There are the tender dues of every hour,
The pillow nightly smoothed by hands just kist,
The active care that guards the wake'ning eye,
The cautious thoughtfulness of earnest love,
The sedu'lous record of each smallest word,
The looks whose pain is steept in balmy tears,
The tones, that growing weaker day by day
Keep strong in love as ever, to the last,—
All after-treasures of consoling wealth,
For the heart's casket of departed things.
But when, like the Malay who, mad for blood,
And raving onward, deals on either side
Precipi'tate blows of unaccounted rage,
The Evil seems to meet us; when he strikes,
In some unwonted, strangely-cruel, way,
Which e'ven in fiction would have foully jarred

Against the regu'lar calm of daily thought,
And broken, like a crash of lawless war,
On our mind's peace ; and when, to point the sting,
Some simplest instrument of common use
Conveys the poison, then the Demon wears
His native Horror,—Death is Death indeed !
To read some twenty words in black and white,
And be made wretched for one's life to come !
To be laid senseless by a certain form
Of syllables pronounced in a low voice !
To see a cloud of gathe'ring agony
Upon the forehead of a trusted friend,
And almost ere the Name has past his lips,
The name of some one that we both adore,
To know *that One* is dead, is gone, is dead,
When, how, we do not know, we do not ask,
Wrapt up in that immense idea of " dead,"
And sensible to nothing else or more !
I know not which is worse,—this stunning shock
This sudden transformation of our being
Into one whole of pain, or that thick coil
Of expectation, presages, and fears,
Which winds itself so close about our heart,
When first the barely-possible event
Of such a loss takes substance in the mind,

And then, as every languid-linge'ring day
Brings fear more nigh to deso'late certainty,
Tighter and tighter draw the racking bonds,
Till anguish can no longer be contained,
But bursts into loud passion, to sink down
Into dumb stupor.

Reader! the hard fates
Of those, who in these tributary lines
May find some shield from a forgetting world,
Tried with this double strain of Misery,
The souls of those who loved them; Reader! pray
That this exceeding sorrow may not fall
Back to its hell, barren of holy fruit,—
That through these two deep rents which woe has made
In their most sacred feelings, they may see
Into the peaceful Heaven that lies beyond.

There were two Brothers, of near kin to me,—
We've played together many a summer eve,
In that short maidenhood of Life when eve
Can find the heart no heavier than at morn,
And day and darkness are all one in joy;
They grew together from the self-same stem,
Of little diffe'rent highths, together drank
The dews of love and close domestic care.

Together sprouted out their vigo'rous green
As Nature's secret will devised the way.
And when the birthright Beauty, bold and free,
Of high-born English boys, was ripe'ning fast
Upon them, home, its halls, and groves, and fields,
Were silent of those two accustomed voices,
Nearly at the same time,—how soon to be
Silent of them for ever! They went forth
Into the distances of land and sea,
One far away, then nearer, then more far,
The roving comrade of the roving waves,—
The other, by the duty of the sword,
Taken to pleasant places, where the arm
Of British power extends its guardian strength
O'er stranger lands too weak to stand alone.
Thus after various changes, wanderings,
And hard experiences of manly life,
In that delicious spot, whose central charms
Embrace the eastern and the western earth,
The fairest of the fair Ionian isles,
The Brothers met once more;—the other's face
Each lookt upon, nor knew it was his brother's;—
For in our mortal spring the craftsman Time
Is active to destroy and recreate,
Both in the inner and the outer Man;—

But joyous recognition soon came on,
First by degrees, then in a rapid flash,
And the old chain of kind fraternity
Was linkt afresh, and, for some few short days,
The Nature of that island-paradise
Witnest their love, witnest their social sports,
And interchange of happiest memories.
Beneath the olive-grove's fine-fretted vault,
They spoke together of the beechen shades,
Spread in broad masses round their distant home ;—
On that cliff-platform, where the large sea-bird
Floats level by, and the sail-studded strait
Lies like a lake within that crescent coast
And the full breast-work of Albanian hills,
They talkt of that dear terrace whose smooth length
Is strecht before their childhood's lordly home,
Above the lawny green befringed with flowers
And sleepy stream and swelling meads beyond.
Into the gulf of the absorbing past,
Those lightly-pinioned hours past one by one ;
And then the Soldier and the Sailor stood,
For the last time, together on the deck,
While slow the sails expanded their white breasts
In the caresses of the lover breeze.
I am a student of the Heart of Man,

And thus 'tis not in curious wilfulness,
That I would know, whether some deeper sense
Than of mere pain at parting did not pass
Athwart their spirits, as they turned away?
Whether did not a stern presentiment
Of many-folded evil hanging round
The personality of their two lives
Cast a dense shade upon the paths that led
Over the Future's hope-illumined plain,
And make the words of sweet encouragement
Faint on their mutual lips, and string their hands
With a convulsive force in that last grasp,
And dim with sudden mist their tearless eyes?
To tell the sum of this sad tale, few words
Are best and all-sufficient;—to display
The forms of pain and death and misery,
With an elabo'rate anatomic skill,
And mould the stark realities of ill
Into fantastic shapes of speech and thought,
Is not the Poet's function, must not be:—
He knows the fineness of his music-strings,
The tender fibres of all-human love,
And will not strike them with a reckless hand,
As if he beat upon a savage drum.
Enough, that ere the earth its annual round

Had many times accomplisht, those bright boys
Had met strange deaths, both strange tho' different;—
The one, from all his comrades singled out
By a mysterious hazard, the sure aim
Of an assassin's hand broke off the bough
Of his full fragrant promise,—he is laid
In that warm forein dust,—rude soldier tears
Have dropt upon his decorated tomb.
The other, ere this wound unhealable
Had lost the first intenseness of its sore,
Perisht, without a trace, without a sign,
In the huge ocean-deserts of the North,
He, and his fellows, and their dwelling-place.
One doom for all,—one darkness undisturbed,—
One desolation for affection's shrine.

We all have read and loved the lovely plaint,
In which the Lyrist, whose most grateful blooms
Spring from the root of purest womanhood,
Has hymned the "Household's" widely scattered
"Graves;"
There's not a verse but has been wept upon;—
And I could wish this not dissimi'lar theme
Had found such skill to work it to such end;
But my faint strain expects no stranger tears,

It is the homage of a kinsman's grief
Written for kindred, nor has other claim :
They will inform the vague imperfect frame
With inward-flowing music of their own,
The melodies of mournful recollections,
The supplement of personal interest,
The sympathies that come far out to meet you,
And other judgment I acknowledge none.

ON A NOBLE CHILD,

EARLY DEAD.

Farewell to thee, thou swift-departed Stranger,
Weary with little stay,—farewell to thee !
There hung a picture in thy nursery
Of the God-boy, who slumbered in the manger,—
And oft I feared, lest Thou should'st meet the danger,
For pride of wealth or lusted empery,
Of losing that which I so loved to see,
Thy likeness to that picture, lovely Stranger.
Thou hast gone back all pure,—thy every feature
Faithful to what the limner's sacred eye
Pourtrayed the Son of God; most blessed creature,
Thy brow unknit by passion, pain, or scorn,
Thine is the special privilege to have borne
The Cross of Love without the Agony.

DANTE'S VISION.

FROM THE "VITA NUOVA."

—•—

With a deep sigh, I whispered to myself,
"It must be in Necessity, one day,
That the most gentle Beatrice shall die;"
And instantly such utter loss of sense
Came on me, that my eyes were closed,—my mind
Began to work, like one delirium-bound,
And its imaginations thus to frame.
In the first wande'ring of my phantasy,
Came certain female faces, with long hair
Dishevelled, telling me, "Thou too shalt die."
Then certain faces after these appeared,
Different,—terrible to gaze upon,—
Which same addrest me, saying, "Thou art dead."
Thus, from my phantasy's first wanderings,
I came at last to be—I knew not where,
And beheld ladies walking, with long hair

Dishevelled—walking marvellously sad;
I saw the sun grow dark, so that the stars
Appeared, and of such tint, that I could judge,
They were lamenting over some one dead,
And mighty earthquakes were about to be.
In such imaginations wondering,
And not without a sense of fear, I thought
Some friend came to me, saying, "From this world
Thy admirable Ladie' has past away."

Then I began to weep right piteously;
And not alone in phantasy I wept,
But with my eyes bathed in their own true tears.
While Heaven-ward I imagined that I gazed,
And seemed to see an Angel-multitude
Returning upwards, and before them spread
Was a small cloud of the most perfect white;
It seemed to me, I heard those Angels sing
Gracefully sweet, and of the words they spoke,
I listened these,—"Osanna in excelsis!"
Other than these I did not seem to hear.
Then said to me the heart so full of love,
"Is the thing true,—lieth our Ladie dead?"
For this, it seemed, I went to see the form
In which had dwelt that noblest blessèd soul.

My wande'ring phantasy, become so strong,
Showed me that Ladie dead,—while ladies seemed
To cover up her head with a white veil:
Such gentle aspect bore her face, methought
It said, "I look upon the Prince of Peace."
Thus thinking, such deep lowliness of spirit
Seized on me, that, to see my Ladie' again,
I called on Death to come and take me, saying,
"Come thou to me, who yearneth earnestly
For thee, and see I wear thy color now."
And when I had beheld consummated
All mournful offices, which for the dead
Use sanctions, I returned, it seemed to me,
Into my room, and there lookt straight to heaven;
And such was the imaginative force,
That I began, loud wailing, to exclaim,
"Most beauteous Spirit! how blest is he who sees
Thee!"

ON THE DEATH OF — — —

I'm not where I was yesterday,
Tho' my home be still the same,
For I have lost the veriest friend
Whom ever a friend could name;
I'm not what I was yesterday,
Tho' change there be little to see,
For a part of myself has lapst away
From Time to Eternity.

I' have lost a thought that many'.a year
Was most familiar food
To my' inmost mind, by night or day,
In merry or plaintive mood;
I' have lost a hope, that many' a year
Lookt far on a gleaming way,
When' the walls of Life were closing round,
And' the sky was sombre grey.

For long, too long, in distant climes
My lot was cast, and then,
A frail and casual intercourse
Was all I had with men;
But lonelily in distant climes
I' was well content to roam,
And felt no void, for my heart was full
O' the friend it had left at home.

And now I was close to my native shores,
And I felt him at my side,
His spirit was in that homeward wind,
His voice in that homeward tide;
For what were to me my native shores,
But that they held the scene,
Where' my youth's most genial flowers had blown,
And' affection's root had been?

I thought, how should I see him first,
How should our hands first meet,
Within his room,—upon the stair,—
At the corner of the street?
I thought, where should I hear him first,
How catch his greeting tone,—
And thus I went up to his door,
And' they told me he was gone!

Oh ! what is Life but a sum of love,
And Death but to lose it all ?
Weeds be for those that are left behind,
And not for those that fall !
And now how mighty a sum of love
Is lost for ever to me . . . . . .
. . . No, I'm not what I was yesterday,
Tho' change there be little to see.

ON A BROTHER AND SISTER.

A Brother and a Sister,—these two Friends,
Cast by fond Nature in one common mould,
And waited on by genial Circumstance
In all their histo'ry of familiar love,
After a parting of not quite four years,
Are peacefully united here once more.

He first, as best beseemed the manly mind,
Tried the dark walk, which has (or seems to have)
No portion in the pleasant sun or stars,
The breath of flowers or morning-song of birds,
The hand of Friendship or the lips of Love.
Whether her sad and separated soul
Received some token from that secret place,
That she might follow him and meet him there,
Or whether God, displeased that anything
Of good or evil should so long divide
Such undefiled and sacred sympathies,
Has made them one again before his face,
Are things that we perhaps shall never know.

Say not, O world of short and broken sight !
That these died young : the Bee and Butterfly
Live longer in one active sunny hour
Than the poor tortoise in his torpid years :
The lofty flights of Thought thro' clear and cloud,—
The labyrinthine ways that Poesy
Leads her beloved, the weary traverses
Of Reason, and the Haven of calm Faith,
All had been theirs ; their seamless brows had known
The seal of pain, the sacrament of tears ;
And, unless Pride and Passion and bold Sin
Are all the rule and recko'ning of our Being,
They have fulfilled as large a task of life
As ever vete'ran on the mortal field.

Thus They, who gave these favored creatures birth,
Deem it no hard infraction of the law
Which regulates the order of our race,
That they above their offspring raise the tomb,
And with parental piety discharge
The duties filial love delights to pay :
They read the perfect sense of the design
In that which seems exception, and they mourn,
Not that these dear ones are already gone,
But that *they* linger still so far behind.

TO A MOURNER.

Sleep not,—you whose hope is dust,
  Love-deserted man!
Or, if feeble body must,
  Seldom as it can.
Sleep is kin to Death they tell,
You for this might love it well,
But it is a kinsman poor,
Hardly gets beyond the door,—
Never fairly dwells within
  Where they rest and weep not
Who are safe from Pain and Sin;
  Sleep not, Mourner, sleep not.

Misery spent revives in Sleep,
  Will has no resistance,
Anguish delves abysses deep
  In that dream-existence.

Then we wake and half-believe,
That we may ourselves deceive,
That the loss our souls deplore
May be but a dream the more;—
Till, at one sharp start, we know,
  Though we shriek and weep not,
Our *reality* of woe,—
  Therefore, brother, sleep not!

But let Sleep some wayward change
  Bring upon our being,
Let sweet fancies freely range
  With calm thoughts agreeing:
Let sad memory be abused
By the pleasure circumfused,
And dear forms no more below
Softly round us come and go;
Or let time be buried quite,
  And the moments creep not,—
Though oblivion be delight,
  Still, poor mourner, sleep not!

For an Agony will come,
  In the instant waking,
Like a dagger driven home,
  Like a nerve in breaking;

Consciousness recove'ring life
But confounds us in the strife,
Wholly yielded up to Pain,
As when drowned men feel again;
In that rush of gasping thought,
  Wo for them that weep not!
Too, too, dearly may be bought
  Such repose—oh! sleep not!

Rather think the Evil down,
  Rather weep it out;
Certain grief remits its frown
  Easier than doubt.
There are strong yet gentle powers
In the growth of many hours;
Sorrow longer-lived will gain
Something more of peace than pain,
Such as God's still works possess,
  Things that sow or reap not
In the world of more and less,
  Live and die, but sleep not.

TO THE MEMORY OF G. V. C.

—•—

Thou too art gone, and yet I hardly know
Why thou didst care to go:
Thou wert so well at heart, so spirit-clear,
So heavenly-calm, though here;
But thus it is, and, it would seem, no more
Can we, who on the shore
Of the loud world still walk, escape the din,
And lie awhile within
The quiet sunlight of thy filmless mind
And rise refresht, refined;
Yet am I mild and tempered in my grief,
Having a sure relief;—
For these dear hours on life's dull length were sprent
By rarest accident,

And *now* I have Thee by me when I will,
Hear thy wise words, and fill
My soul with thy calm looks; *now* I can tame
Ill thoughts by thy mere name.
Death, the Divorcer, has united us
With bands impervious
To any tooth of Time, for they are wove
Of the same texture as an Angel's Love.

Feb. 23, 1835.

TWO VISITS TO A GRAVE.

I stood by the grave of one beloved,
On' a chill and windless night,—
When not a blade of grass was moved,
In its rigid sheath of white.

The starry armament lookt down,
From' the glassy waste the while,
Perchance they could not seem to frown,
But they did not seem to smile.

Long time had past since they laid him there,
But I heeded not of time,
I knew the stone, tho' blank and bare,
Unmarkt by line or rhyme.

Madly I wept that I had been
Over the wild wild sea,
When he had found in this last scene,
A home and a privacy.

The gloomy stillness of the hour
Came coldly to my heart,
And Faith and Hope grew weak in power
To soothe the sinner's smart;

I almost curst the good great God,—
And vowed that I would be
Even as he beneath the sod,
Tho' I had not lived as he.

I left the tomb,—I ceast to weep,—
But grisly forms of pain
Came thronging from the fields of sleep,
And forced me back again.

That morn the hoar-frost still was there,
In place of balmy dew,—
Unshaken was the silvered hair
Of the old church-yard yew.

I heard a company of birds
Their grateful carol troll,
And' a sense of prayer, too much for words,
Arose within my soul.

The web of early mist was gone,
Fresh-wove in nature's loom,
For the sun, like a bold free spirit, shone
Clear on the gliste'ning tomb.

I worshipt, as the gold flood poured
On' the scene, before so dim;
And when the Beauti'ful I adored,
My thoughts were still of him.

I thought, I prayed, and thus became
More full of sweet content,
Watching the sun-beams gently frame
The earth to merriment.

I was not happy, but I prayed,
At heart, that' I might *not* be
As he who in that grave was laid,
Till I had lived as he.

1829.

LIFE IN DEATH.

Indeed you do me wrong,—I merit not
Those hard censorious eyes and dull regards,
Because I have not wept, or sighed, or raved,
Or sat in a mute madness, tho' I knew
That she, whom we so loved, is gone away.
I have lost nothing, why then should I weep?
She is to *me* the same she ever was,
A never-ceasing presence, a life-light,
In the dark watches of the pleasant night,
Or some far darker passages of day.

If I would weep, or mourn her fancied loss,
The azure fire, that wells from her calm eyes,
Laps up my tears, and tells me she is here;

If I am sick at heart, she sits beside me,
And lays the velvet back of her white hand
Upon my cheek, to ask if all be well,
Or parts the hair upon my heated brows.
Since that one instant, in itself a life,
When, as commissioned messengers, my eyes
Went to her, and brought back into my soul
A gift, the greatest of all possible gifts,
Which God-empowered Man can give to Man,
A notion of the abso'lute Beautiful,
Since then, all nature has been one to me,
One Form impregnated with her sole Spirit:
I feel the ambient sweetness of her breath
In flowe'ring rosiers and the woods of spring;
Her voice is gushing from the nightingale;
There's not a cloud that walks the' unsullied air,
But takes from her its majesty of gait,
For Space was made to show how she could move.
I do not say, that when I saw her lie
Husht to cold sleep by Nature's lullabies,
(The same that plaintive Nurse eternally
Sings as she rocks to rest her dearly-loved,)
I did not for one moment stare aghast,
And know the blood stood still about my heart;
But soon the wailers left me there alone,

And in the quiet of the gloom I saw
The blessed image, moving, ministe'ring,
By me, about me,—just as heretofore.

O ye! who talk of Death, and mourn for Death,
Why do you raise a phantom of your weakness,
And then shriek loud to see what ye have made?
There is no Death, to those who know of Life—
No Time, to those who see Eternity.

DEATH IN LIFE.

"Sie hören nicht die folgenden Gesänge,
Die Seelen, denen ich die ersten sang;
Mein Lied ertönt der unbekannten Menge,
Ihr Beifall selbst macht meinem Herzen bang."

GÖTHE.

I PRAY you, dearest friend, urge me no more
To clothe my thoughts in melody and rhyme,
And lay them out, upon the open shore,
To catch the breezes of this wayward time.

For you, who know the sum of my sad fate,
Should be the last to urge so hard a suit;
When the heart reels beneath misfortune's weight,
Oh! let the hand be still, the lips be mute.

You know what I have won, what I have lost,
You saw the glory, see you not the gloom?
Are not my hairs all blanched with misc'ry's frost,
Do I not breathe the vapors of the tomb?

But even were I, as I would be, calm,—
Thought I, where she is gone, that I could go,—
Had Hope and Memory full store of balm,
To heal the ceaseless soreness of the blow:

Even then, in this my solitary lot,
With every fibre of my soul unstrung,
How should I sing to those who know me not,
How would they listen while the Stranger sung?

In truth I do not hate the gene'ral world,—
I hold my brother mortals far too dear
To watch unhurt the critic's lip upcurled,
To meet with smiles the pedant's silent sneer.

And if perchance my wave'ring spirit swerved,
Or failed in words to reach the' imagined aim,
How would they judge the penalty deserved?
How would they weigh the pity and the blame?

I am too faint to scorn when they reprove,
Too broken to confront their rigid law,
Who have no mantle of familiar love,
To shield the frailty, and conceal the flaw.

It was not thus, when She was by my side,
Under whose eye the current of my song,
In all the power and bliss of peaceful pride,
Transparent with her beauty, flowed along.

How little reckt I then what others thought,
What others said, the many and the cold!
Her dear content was all the praise I sought,
And with her smile what craven were not bold?

That is all gone,—but her immortal part
Still holds communion with its former home,
That inmost chamber of the lover's heart,
Where even you and friendship cannot come;

And when this image of my glory fled
Attunes the discord to its holy will,
Though not a word be writ or utterèd,
It matters not,—I am the Poet still.

So let me rest,—nor think that you can bless
My joyless life with hope of other fame,—
Than that the memory of her loveliness
May live in union with my húmble name.

THE END.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS.

THE

POEMS

OF

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN GREECE."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

MEMORIALS OF A RESIDENCE ON THE CONTINENT.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

BRADBURY AND EVANS,
PRINTERS-EXTRAORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,
WHITEFRIARS.

MEMORIALS

OF

A RESIDENCE ON THE CONTINENT,

AND

HISTORICAL POEMS.

TO

THE VISCOUNTESS GALWAY.

My dear Sister,

It is a custom of that graceful people among whom we have lived so long, to accompany the nuptials of their relations and friends with the dedication of some literary record,—some memorial of a nature more permanent or reproductive than can belong to other tokens of courtesy and regard.

On this solemn celebration I do not know what more becoming offering I could make to you than these Poems, the greater part of which refer to that

period and that country, to what we there have seen, to what we there have felt together,—to those common thoughts which we should be unwilling, if not unable, to apportion,—to those sympathies, of which we cannot tell the links, even when most conscious of the chain.

Let, then, these echoes harmonize with the tones of prayer and benediction; let memory minister to hope for the progress and accomplishment of your happiness.

And, in truth, how naturally do such mingled feelings grow up and cluster about your marriage-altar! for your present destiny is rather the ripening of familiar affections, than any sudden change and transference of the relations of life and love; your new home will be peopled with old associations, and your children may stand around the hearth where you, in your childhood, played.

For those, whose days are thus bound together in filial succession of reverence and delight, the worst conditions of humanity are overruled, and time has taken something of the being of eternity.

Be of thankful heart, then, my dearest sister, for this and all other blessings,—for happiness enjoyed and happiness awaited,—for the love you have dispenst and the love you have won,—and, above all, for the power that is in you to fulfil the Christian ideal—to live in joy and peace, forgetting not the unhappy.

London, April 25th, 1838.

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Though blank the range of place and fact
To hearts that only rise and fall,
God and the Poet can extract
Beauty and Truth from each and all.

MEMORIALS

OF A

RESIDENCE ON THE CONTINENT.

THE DEATH OF DAY.

WRITTEN ON THE RHINE.

Full of hours, the Day is falling
Where its brethren lie,—
A stern and royal voice is calling
The beautiful to die.

The banners of the west
A splendid breadth unfold,—
Their glory be unblest!
There is blood upon the gold.

Great Time, how canst thou slay,
With such a fune'ral state,
The gay and gentle Day,
Whom none could fear or hate?

Oh! mark him on his bed,
How flusht his quiet cheek,
How lowly droops his head,
And eyes that more than speak.

Let not the giddy breeze
Make sport of his last moans;
Weave them, ye aged trees,
Into Æolian tones.

The hills, in clear outline,
Against the blanching sky,
Stand forth, nor seem to pine
For' the joy that' is passing by

But solemnly and boldly
They bid a sad farewell,
Nor feel the pain more coldly
They are too proud to tell.

All leaves and blossoms pray
One deep and constant prayer:
"Take him not all away,
That made us seem so fair;

" Say not, that, in its turn,
'T is pleasant to behold
The lamp of darkness burn
Light-amber or red-gold;

" Praise not the coming night,
Its damp and sallow ray,
We would not call it bright,
Tho' it came not after Day.

" We' have wept when Day was sighing,—
His gloom has made us mourn,—
And now our love is dying,
What care we for the born?"

ON A RUINED CASTLE,

NEAR THE RHINE.

This was a fortress, firm and stout,
When there was battling round about,—
It has been deckt in gala-plight,
In days of ladie-love and knight,—
It' has known carouse and Provençal song,
And the dance right featly tript along,
While' the red yuhl-log and wassail bowl
Cheered the pilgrim's thirsty soul.
The swoop of Time has been to it
A bounty and a benefit,—
It has gained glory from those wings,
Which have annihilated Kings;
And now it stands in its massiveness,
Wi' the scars of many an age,
Like a lore-encumbered prophetess,
Who' has worn away her youthfulness,
In studies deep and sage.

I LOVE the Forest;—I could dwell among
That silent people, till my thoughts up-grew
In nobly-ordered form, as to my view
Rose the succession of that lofty throng:—
The mellow footstep on a ground of leaves
Formed by the slow decay of nume'rous years,—
The couch of moss, whose growth alone appears,
Beneath the fir's inhospitable eaves,—
The chirp and flutter of some single bird,—
The rustle in the brake,—what precious store
Of joys have these on Poets' hearts conferred?
And then at times to send one's own voice out,
In the full frolic of *one* startling shout,
Only to feel the after-stillness more!

THE BOY ROBERT.

FROM THE GERMAN OF ARNDT.

The stripling Robert, good and brave,
Holds in his hand a bare-drawn glaive,
And on the altar of the Lord,
He lays it with this earnest word:

"I swear to thee, O fatherland!
With naked sword in clenchèd hand,
On this thy consecrated shrine,
Still to the death to be sincerely thine.

"I swear with heart and mind to be
Thy honest servant, Liberty!
Body and soul, through all life's span,
For thou art the sublimest good of Man.

" I swear a bloody, burning, hate,
And scorn, whose depth can ne'er abate,
To Gallic guile and Gallic band,
That they may never shame our German land.

" And Thou, whose high coercing sway
Heaven's Suns and earthly hearts obey,
Thou mighty God ! stand by my oath,
Be thou the guardian of my faithful troth.

" That I, from lie and treache'ry pure,
May be thy Lieger true and sure,—
And that this brand may never pause
In the high duty of a righteous cause.

" And if against my fatherland
And God I draw it, then this hand
Be dust, this arm be withered cold,
And be this hilt a hundred-weight to hold !"

Oh ! no, oh ! no, for ever no !
No caitiff thought will Robert know,—
To God the Lord this oath is given,
Honour and Virtue lighten him to heaven.

ON THE JUNGFRAU,

BY MOONLIGHT.

—•—

The maiden moon is resting
The maiden mount above,
They gaze upon each other,
With cold majestic love.

So I and Thou, sweet sister,
Upon each other gaze,
Our love was warm, but sorrow
Has shorn it of its rays.

As in the hazy heav'n
That gentle Orb appears,
Thou lookest in my face,
Tearful,—not shedding tears.

Like thine, her face is pale,
But from within a light,
Mild-gleaming as thy spirit,
Comes out upon the night,

And casts a tender sheen
On that pale hill beneath,
Pale ! as my heart, which wears
The dull-white hue of Death.

MONT BLANC.

Mount! I have watcht thee, at the fall of dew,
Array thee in thy panoply of gold,—
And then cast over it thy rosy vest,—
And last that awful robe that looks so cold,
Thy ghastly spectre-dress of nameless hue:
Then thou art least of earth, and then I love thee best.

WRITTEN IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE TYROL.

A Heart the world of men had bound and sealed
With shameful stamp and miserable chain,
Here, mother Nature, is to Thee revealed,
Open to Thee; oh! be it not in vain.
Flow over it, ye Torrents,—though I fear,
That be your course as fierce as e'er it may,
The sorrow-stains engrained there many a year
Your force can never, never, wash away:
Then come, ye Mountains, ye half-heavenly Forms,
Based in deep lakes and woods, and crowned with storms,
Close on it,—cover,—seal it up again,
But with the signet of your own pure power,
So that unbroken, till the' all-searching hour
Of Death, that impress may on it remain.

In the treasury of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Peter at Salzburg, I was shown a gold and jewel-studded pen with which every brother, on his entrance into the order, signed his name. This had been the custom for many centuries.

MS. Journal.

This dainty instrument, this table-toy,
Might seem best fitted for the use and joy
Of some high Ladie in old gallant times,
Or gay-learned weaver of Provençal rhymes:
With such a pen did sweet Francesca trace
Some hurried lines beneath her blushing face,
And hid them in her lover's doublet-sleeve,
To let him know, that, ere to-morrow eve,
They would enjoy the luscious summer-weather,
And read their favo'rite Launcelot together;
With such a pen did tremu'lous Mary write
To bid good Chat'elet come and play to-night;
And so we might go on for hours, and fold
Our colo'ring fancies round this antient gold;

But here one stern Reality appears,
And leaves no place for other dreams or tears,—
The simple record, that, with this one pen,
Have hundreds of our brothers, fellow-men,
Signed by their names the awfullest decree
That between them and all the world could be;
Those few small letters, when thus written, said—
" The writer, though he live, is living dead;
" The world of man, of beauty, and of bloom,
" This visi'ble earth, but serves him for a tomb,—
" He feels no more its glories or its gains,
" His soul can only know its purging pains,—
" Here from the trails of sin however sure,
" He needs that suffe'ring to be perfect-pure."
Think of the fingers that have dared to hold
This fateful relic! Some with grasp so bold,
You would believe that nothing but the pride
Of glory won, ambition satisfied,
Or joy of meed long-toiled for, could command
Such full composure in an aged hand:
And yet the most of those, who hither brought
Their Being's sacrifice were men well taught
In the world's wisdom, men who had lived through
All that life gives to suffer and to do;

Who had grown old in wars of spi'rit and arm,
But found in Victo'ry no victorious charm
Against the clouding armament of Ill,
Licenst on earth by God's unsounded will.
Some might be young,—by strange heart-prescience led
To know that Life is but a sick-man's bed,
On which, with aching head and limbs, we lie
Through the hot Night of our humanity,
Waiting for Death, our Lucifer,—so blest
Is he, through whose deep-drugged and senseless rest
No Dreams can pierce,—and thus they did but crave
To seek this stupor in the cloiste'ral grave ;
These held the Pen, as valor holds a sword
Against the foe that doubted of its word ;
Yet others still might be,—young too and fair,
Strong too, but only strengthened by Despair,
Who,—when that closing moment came at last,
That one thin line, which lay between the past
And the unknown bleak Future,—that deep trench,
Which now leapt over, by a fearful wrench
Of all most natu'ral instincts, held the soul,
Once the world's freeman, once without controul
Working and wande'ring, bound to a new law,
Captive in Faith and prisoner in Awe,—

Caught up this Pen, and quiveringly traced
The names, that thence could never be effaced,
With moveless eyes and pale-blue lips convulst,
As if the salient blood were all repulst
To its free source,—as if within their clutch
They had a poisoned dagger, and its touch
Was on their living flesh ;—yet they, even they,
Found in these precincts Joy, we will not say,
But, what is better, Peace ;—they askt no more ;
Happy the wave that breaks upon the shore !

THE RIVER TRAUN.

WRITTEN IN LOMBARDY.

The Traun rises in the mountains of Upper Austria, and loses itself in the Danube above Linz. Its course is remarkable for the combination of the best features of Alpine scenery with the grace and elegance of the Southern landskip.

My heart is in a mountain mood,
Though I am bound to tread the plain,
She will away for ill or good,—
I cannot lure her back again;
So let her go,—God speed her flight
O'er racy glebe and columned town,
I know that she will rest e'er night,
By the remembered banks of Traun.

And she will pray her sister Muse,
Sister, companion, friend, and guide,
Her every art and grace to use,
For love of that well-cherisht tide ;
But words are weak,—she cannot reach
By such poor steps that Beauty's crown;
How can the Muse to *others* teach
What were to me the banks of Traun ?

She can repeat the faithful tale
That " where thy genial waters flow,
" All objects the rare crystal hail,
" And cast their voices far below ;
" And there the stedfast echoes rest,
" Till the old Sun himself goes down,
" Till darkness falls on every breast,
" Even on thine, transparent Traun."

And she can say, " Where'er thou art,
" Brawling 'mid rocks, or calm-embayed,
" Outpouring thy abundant heart
" In ample lake or deep cascade,—
" Whatever dress thy sides adorn,
" Fresh-dewy leaves or fir-stems brown,
" Or ruby-dripping barbe'ry-thorn,
" Thou art thyself, delightful Traun !

" No glacier-mountains, harshly bold,
" Whose peaks disturb the summer air,
" And make the gentle blue so cold,
" And hurt our warmest thoughts, are there ;
" But upland meadows, lush with rills,
" Soft-green as is the love-bird's down,
" And quaintest forms of pine-clad hills,
" Are thy fit setting, jewelled Traun !"

But the wise Muse need not be told,
Though fair and just her song may seem,
The same has oft been sung of old,
Of many' a less deserving stream ;
For where would be the worth of sight,
If Love could feed on blank renown ?
They who have loved the Traun aright,
Have sat beside the banks of Traun.

WRITTEN IN PETRARCH'S HOUSE AT ARQUA,

AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS.

Petrarch ! I would that there might be
In this thy household sanctuary
No visi'ble monument of thee :

The fount that whilom played before thee,
The roof that rose in shelter o'er thee,
The low fair hills that still adore thee,—

I would no more ; thy memory
Must loathe all cold reality,
Thought-worship only is for thee.

They say thy tomb lies there below;
What want I with the marble show?
I am content,—I will not go:

For though by Poesy's high grace
Thou sawe'st, in thy calm resting-place,
God, Love, and Nature face to face;

Yet now that thou art wholly free,
How can it give delight to see
That sign of thy captivity?

FEELINGS EXCITED BY SOME MILITARY MANŒUVRES AT VERONA.

What is the lesson I have brought away,
After the moment's palpitating glee?
What has this pomp of men, this strong array
Of thousands and ten thousands been to me?
Did I find nothing but the vision gay,
The mere phenomenon that all could see?
Did I feel nothing but the brute display
Of Power,—the show of centred energy?
Trembling and humbled, I was taught how hard
It is for our strait minds at once to scan
The might of banded numbers, and regard
The individual soul, the living Man;
To use mechanic multitudes, and yet
Our common human feelings not forget!

MEDITATIVE FRAGMENTS, ON VENICE.

I.

The ruler of the Adriatic, who never was infant nor stripling, whom God took by the right hand and taught to walk by himself the first hour.

LANDOR.

WALK in St. Mark's, the time the ample space
Lies in the freshness of the evening shade,
When, on each side, with gravely-darkened face
The masses rise above the light arcade;
Walk down the midst with slowly-tunéd pace,
But gay withal,—for there is high parade
Of fair attire and fairer forms, which pass
Like varying groups on a magician's glass.

From broad-illumined chambers far within,
Or under curtains daintily outspread,
Music, and laugh, and talk, the motley din
Of all who from sad thought or toil are sped,
Here a chance hour of social joy to win,
Gush forth,—but *I* love best, above my head
To feel nor arch nor tent, nor anything
But that pure Heaven's eternal covering.

It is one broad Saloon, one gorgeous Hall;
A chamber, where a multitude, all Kings,
May hold full audience, splendid festival,
Or Piety's most pompous ministerings;
Thus be its highth unmarred,—thus be it all
One mighty room, whose form direct upsprings
To the o'er-arching sky;—it is right good,
When Art and Nature keep such brotherhood.

For where, upon the firmest sodden land,
Has ever Monarch's power and toil of slaves
Equalled the works of that self-governed band,
Who fixt the Delos of the Adrian waves;
Planting upon these strips of yielding sand
A Temple of the Beautiful, which braves
The jealous strokes of ocean, nor yet fears
The far more peri'lous sea, "whose waves are years?"

Walk in St. Mark's again, some few hours after,
When a bright sleep is on each storied pile,—
When fitful music, and inconstant laughter,
Give place to Nature's silent moonlight smile:
Now Fancy wants no faery gale to waft her
To Magian haunt, or charm-engirded isle,
All too content, in passive bliss, to see
This show divine of visi'ble Poetry:—

On such a night as this impassionedly
The old Venetian sung those verses rare,
"That Venice must of needs eternal be,
For Heaven had lookt through the pellucid air,
And cast its reflex in the crystal sea,
And Venice was the image pictured there *;"
I hear them now, and tremble, for I seem
As treading on an unsubstantial dream.

Who talks of vanisht glory, of dead power,
Of things that were, and are not? Is he here?
Can he take in the glory of this hour,
And call it all the decking of a bier?

* Ich hörte einen blinden Sänger in Chioggia, der sang, Venedig sey eine ewige Stadt; der Himmel hätte sich im Meer gespiegelt und sein Widerschein wäre Venedig. GRAF VON PLATEN.

No, surely as on that Titanic tower *
The Guardian Angel stands in æther clear,
With the moon's silver tempe'ring his gold wing,
So Venice lives, as lives no other thing:—

That strange Cathedral! exquisitely strange,—
That front, on whose bright varied tints the eye
Rests as of gems,—those arches, whose high range
Gives its rich-broidered border to the sky,—
Those ever-prancing steeds!—My friend, whom change
Of restless will has led to lands that lie
Deep in the East, does not thy fancy set
Above those domes an airy minaret?

Dost thou not feel, that in this scene are blent
Wide distances of the estrangèd earth,
Far thoughts, far faiths, beseeming her who bent
The spacious Orient to her simple worth,
Who, in her own young freedom eminent,
Scorning the slaves that shamed their antient birth,
And feeling what the West, could be, had been,
Went out a Trave'ller, and returned a Queen?

* The Campanile.

II.

The Golden Book *
Is now unwritten in, and stands unmoved,
Save when the curious traveller takes down
A random volume, from the dusty shelf,
To trace the progress of a bruited name;
The Bucentaur
Is shattered, and of its resplendent form
There is no remnant, but some splintered morsel,
Which in his cabin, as a talisman,
Mournfully hangs the pious Gondolier;
The Adrian sea
Will never have a Doge to marry more,—
The meagre favors of a forein lord
Can hardly lead some score of humble craft
With vilest merchandize into the port,
That whilom held the wealth of half a world.
Thy palaces
Are bartered to the careful Israelite,—
Or left to perish, stone by stone, worn down

* The Libro d' Oro, the Venetian "Peerage."

In desolation,—solemn skeletons,
Whose nakedness some tufts of pitying grass,
Or green boughs trembling o'er the trembling wall,
Adorn but hide not.

And are these things true,
Miracu'lous Venice? Is the charm then past
Away from thee? Is all thy work fulfilled
Of power and beauty? Art thou gatherèd
To the dead cities? Is thy ministry
Made up, and folded in the hand of Thought?
Ask him who knows the meaning and the truth
Of all existence;—ask the Poet's heart:
Thy Book has no dead tome for him,—for him,
Within St. Mark's emblazoned porticoes,
Thy old nobility are walking still;—
The lowliest gondola upon thy waters
Is worth to him thy decorated galley;
He never looks upon the Adrian sea
But as thy lawful tho' too faithless spouse;
And when, in the sad lustre of the moon,
Thy palaces seem beautifully wan,
He blesses God that there is left on earth
So marvellous, so full, an antidote,
For all the racks and toils of mortal life,
As thy sweet countenance to gaze upon.

III.

L I D O.

I WENT to greet the full May-moon
On that long narrow shoal
Which lies between the still Lagoon
And the' open Ocean's roll.

How pleasant was that grassy shore,
When one for months had been
Shut up in streets,—to feel once more
One's footfall on the green!

There are thick trees too in that place;
But straight from sea to sea,
Over a rough uncultured space,
The path goes drearily.

I past along, with many a bound,
To hail the fresh free wave;
But, pausing, wonderingly found
I' was treading on a grave.

Then, at one careless look, I saw
That, for some distance round,
Tomb-stones, without design or law,
Were scattered on the ground:

Of pirates or of mariners
I deemed that these might be
The fitly-chosen sepulchres,
Encircled by the sea.

But there were words inscribed on all,
I' the tongue of a far land,
And marks of things symbolical,
I could not understand.

They are the graves of that sad race,
Who, from their Syrian home,
For ages, without resting-place,
Are doomed in woe to roam;

Who, in the days of sternest faith,
Glutted the sword and flame,
As if a taint of moral death
Were in their very name:

And even under laws most mild,
All shame was deemed their due,
And the nurse told the Christian child
To shun the cursèd Jew.

Thus all their gold's insidious grace
Availed not here to gain,
For their last sleep, a seemlier place
Than this bleak-featured plain.

Apart, severely separate,
On' the verge of the' outer sea,
Their home of Death is desolate
As their Life's home could be.

The common sand-path had defaced
And prest down many a stone;
Others can be but faintly traced
I' the rank grass o'er them grown.

I thought of Shylock,—the fierce heart
Whose wrongs and inju'ries old
Temper, in Shakspeare's world of Art,
His lusts of blood and gold;

Perchance that form of broken pride
Here at my feet once lay,—
But lay alone,—for at his side
There was no Jessica!

Fondly I love each island-shore,
Embraced by Adrian waves;
But none has Memo'ry cherisht more
Than Lido and its graves.

IV.

Oh Poverty! thou bitter-hearted fiend!
How darest thou approach the Beautiful?
How darest thou give up these palaces,
Where deli'cate Art in wood and marble wove
Its noblest fancies, with laborious skill,
To the base uses of the artizan?
How darest thou defile with coarsest stores,
And vermin's loathsome nests, the aged walls,
Whence Titian's women burningly looked down
On the rich-vested pomp that shone below?
Is nothing sacred for thy hand, no names,
No memories,—thou bold Iniquity!
Shall men, on whose fine brows we recognize
The lines of some great ducal effigies,
Which frown along St. John's cathedral aisles*,
With hearts as high as any of their fathers,
Sink silent under thy slow martyrdom,

* The Venetian Pantheon of S. Giovanni e Paolo.

Leaving their children, Liberty's just heirs,
Children like those that Gianbellini painted*,
To batten on the miserable alms,
The sordid fragments of their country's wealth,
Doled out by servants of a stranger king?
Is there no engine of compassionate Death,
Which with a rapid mercy will relieve
This antient city of its shamèd being?
Is War so weary that he cannot strike
One iron blow, that she may fold her robe
About her head, and fall imperially?
Is there no eager earthquake far below,
To shiver her frail limbs, and hurl her down,
Into the bosom of her mated sea?
Or must she, for a lapse of wretched years,
Armless and heartless, tremble on as now,
Like one who hears the tramp of murderous foes,
Unseen, and feels them nearer, nearer, still;—
Till round her Famine's pestilential breath,
Fatally closing, to the gloom of Time,
She shall, in quive'ring agony, give up
The spirit of that light, which burnt so long,
A steadfast glory, an unfailing fire?

* E. G. In the refectories of the Redentore and Frari.

Thus ran the darkling current of my thoughts,
As one sad night, from the Rialto's edge,
I lookt into the waters,—on whose face
Glimmered the reflex of some few faint stars,
And two far-flitting lamps of gondoliers,
That seemed on that black flat to move alone,
While, on each side, each well-known building lost
Its sepa'rate beauty in one dark long curve.

V.

City, whose name did once adorn the world,
Thou mightst have been all that thou ever wert,
In form and feature and material strength,
Up from the sea, which is thy pedestal,
Unto thy Campanile's golden top,
And yet have never won the precious crown,
To be the loved of human hearts, to be
The wise man's treasure now and evermore.—
The' ingenious boldness, the creative will,
Which from some weak uncertain plots of sand,
Cast up among the waters, could erect
Foundations firm as on the central ground,—
The art which changed thy huts to palaces,
And bade the God of Ocean's temples rise
Conspicuous far above the crystal plain,—
The ever-active nerve of Industry,
That bound the Orient to the Occident

In fruitful commerce, till thy lap was filled
With wealth, the while thy head was girt with power,—
Each have their sepa'rate palm from wonde'ring men;
But the sage thinker's passion must have source
In sympathy entire with that rare spirit
Which did possess thee, as thy very life,—
That power of union and self-sacrifice,
Which from the proud republics of old time
Devolved upon thee, by a perfect faith
Strung to a tenfold deeper energy.
Within thy people's mind immutable
Two notions held associate monarchy,
Religion and the state,—to which alone
In their full freedom, they declared themselves
Subject, and deemed this willing servitude
Their dearest privilege of liberty.
Thus at the call of either sacred cause,
All wealth, all feelings, all peculiar rights,
Were made one universal holocaust,
Without a thought of pain,—thus all thy sons
Bore thee a love, not vague and hard defined,
But close and personal, a love no force
Could take away, no coldness could assuage.
Thus when the noble body' of Italy,
Which God has bound in one by Alps and sea,

Was struggling with torn heart and splintered limbs,
So that the very marrow of her strength
Mixt with the lavisht gore and oozed away,—
Town banded against town, street against street,
House against house, and father against son,
The servile victims of unmeaning feuds,—
Thou didst sustain the wholeness of thy power,—
Thy altar was as a domestic hearth,
Round which thy children sat in brotherhood;—
Never was name of Guelf or Ghibelline
Writ on thy front in letters of bright blood;
Never the stranger, for his own base ends,
Flattered thy passions, or by proffered gold
Seduced the meanest of thy citizens.—
Thus too the very suffe'rers of thy wrath,
Whom the unsparing prudence of the state,
For erring judgment, insufficient zeal,
Or heavier fault, had banisht from its breast,
Ev'en they, when came on thee thy hour of need,
Fell at thy feet and prayed, with humble tears,
That thou wouldst deign at least to use their wealth,
Though thou didst scorn the gift of their poor lives*.

* As in the instance of Antonio Grimani, who was living in exile at Rome at the time of the league of Cambray. He had been condemned for some error in fighting against the Turks. When Venice was in distress, he offered all his private fortune to the state. After her victory he was not only recalled, but elected Doge some years later.

* * * * * *

Prime model of a Christian commonwealth!
Thou wise simplicity, which present men
Calumniate, not conceiving,—joy is mine,
That I have read and learnt thee as I ought,
Not in the crude compiler's painted shell,
But in thine own memorials of live stone,
And in the pictures of thy kneeling princes,
And in the lofty words on lofty tombs,
And in the breath of antient chroniclers,
And in the music of the outer sea.

THE VENETIAN SERENADE.

When along the light ripple the far serenade
Has accosted the ear of each passionate maid,
She may open the window that looks on the stream,—
She may smile on her pillow and blend it in dream;
Half in words, half in music, it pierces the gloom,
"I am coming—Stalì—but you know not for whom!
Stalì—not for whom!"

Now the tones become clearer,—you hear more and more
How the water divided returns on the oar,—
Does the prow of the gondola strike on the stair?
Do the voices and instruments pause and prepare?
Oh! they faint on the ear as the lamp on the view,
"I am passing—Premì—but I stay not for you!
Premì—not for you!"

Then return to your couch, you who stifle a tear,—
Then awake not, fair sleeper—believe he is here ;
For the young and the loving no sorrow endures,
If to-day be another's, to-morrow is yours ;—
May, the next time you listen, your fancy be true,
" I am coming—Sciàr—and for you and to you !
Sciàr—and to you !"

The Venetian words here used are the calls of the gondoliers, derived from the verbs Stalire, to go to the left, Premire, to go to the right, and Sciare, to stop the boat by turning the flat part of the oar against the current.

FROM GÖTHE.

Let me this gondola boat compare to the slumberous cradle,
And to a spacious bier liken the cover demure ;
Thus on the open canal through life we are swaying and swimming
Onward with never a care, coffin and cradle between.

A DREAM IN A GONDOLA.

I HAD a dream of waters: I was borne
Fast down the slimy tide
Of eldest Nile, and endless flats forlorn
Strecht out on either side,—
Save where from time to time arose
Red pyramids, like flames in forced repose,
And Sphynxes gazed, vast countenances bland,
Athwart that river-sea and sea of sand.

It is the nature of the Life of Dream,
To make all action of our mental springs,
Howe'er unnatu'ral, discrepant and strange,
Be as the' unfolding of most usual things;
And thus to me no wonder did there seem,
When, by a subtle change,

The heavy ample byblus-wingèd boat,
In which I lay afloat,
Became a deft canoe, light-wove
Of painted bark, gay-set with lustrous shells,
Faintingly rockt within a lonesome cove,
Of some rich island where the Indian dwells;
Below, the water's pure-white light
Took color from reflected blooms,
And, through the forest's deepe'ning glooms,
Birds of illuminated plumes
Came out like stars in summer-night:
And close beside, all fearless and serene,
Within a niche of drooping green,
A girl, with limbs fine-rounded and clear-brown,
And hair thick-waving down,
Advancing one small foot, in beauty stood,
Trying the temper of the lambent flood.

But on my spirit in that spicèd air
Embalmed, and in luxurious senses drowned,
Another change of sweet and fair
There past, and of the scene around
Nothing remained the same in sight or sound:
For now the Wande'rer of my dream
Was gliding down a fable-stream

Of long-dead Hellas, with much treasure
Of inworking thoughtful pleasure;
While the silver line meanders
Through the tall pink oleanders,
Through the wood of tufted rushes,
Through the arbute's ruby-bushes,
Voices of a happy hymn
Every moment grow less dim,
Till at last the slim caïque
(Hollowed from a single stem
Of a hill-brow's diadem)
Rests in a deep-dented creek
Myrtle-ambusht,—and above
Songs, the very breath of Love,
Stream from Temples reverend-old,
Porticos of Doric mould,
Snow-white islands of devotion,
Planted in the rose and gold
Of the evening's æther-ocean;—
O joyant Earth! belovèd Grecian sky!
O favored Wanderer—honored dreamer I!

Yet not less favored when awake,—for now,
Across my torpid brow

Swept a cool current of the young night's air,
With a sharp kiss, and there
Was I all clear awake,—drawn soft along
There in my own dear Gondola, among
The bright-eyed Venice isles,
Lit up in constant smiles.—
What had my thoughts and heart to do
With wild Egyptian bark, or frail canoe,
Or mythic skiff out of Saturnian days,
When I was there, with that rare scene to praise,
That Gondola to rest in and enjoy,
That actual bliss to taste without alloy?
Cradler of placid pleasures, deep delights,
Bosomer of the Poet's wearied mind,
Tempter from vulgar passions scorns and spites,
Enfolder of all feelings that be kind,—
Before our souls thy quiet motions spread,
In one great calm, one undivided plain,
Immediate joy, blest memo'ries of the dead,
And iris-tinted forms of hope's domain,
Child of the still Lagoons,
Open to every show
Of summer sunsets and autumnal moons,
Such as no other space of world can know,—

Dear Boat, that makest dear
Whatever thou com'st near,—
In thy repose still let me gently roam,
Still on thy couch of beauty find a home;
Still let me share thy comfortable peace
With all I have of dearest upon Earth,
Friend, mistress, sister; and when death's release
Shall call my spirit to another birth,
Would that I might thus lightly lapse away,
Alone,—by moonlight,—in a Gondola.

ON THE MAD-HOUSE AT VENICE.

I lookt and saw between us and the sun
A building on an island, such an one
As age to age might add, for uses vile,
A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile;
And on the top an open tower, where hung
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung,—
We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue;
The broad sun sank behind it, and it tolled
In strong and black relief. "What we behold
Shall be the Madhouse and its belfry tower,"
Said Maddalo.

SHELLEY.

HONOR aright the philosophic thought,
That they who, by the trouble of the brain
Or heart, for usual life are overwrought,
Hither should come to discipline their pain.
A single Convent on a shoaly plain
Of waters never changing their dull face
But by the sparkles of thick-falling rain
Or lines of puny waves,—such is the place.

Strong medi'cine enters by the ear and eye ;
That low unalte'ring dash against the wall
May lull the angriest dream to vacancy ;
And Melancholy, finding nothing strange
For her poor self to jar upon at all,
Frees her sad-centred thoughts, and gives them pleasant
range.

TO — — —.

WRITTEN AT VENICE.

Not only through the golden haze
Of indistinct surprise,
With which the Ocean-bride displays
Her pomp to stranger eyes;—
Not with the fancy's flashing play,
The trave'ller's vulgar theme,
Where following objects chase away
The moment's dazzling dream;—

Not thus art thou content to see
The City of my love,—
Whose beauty is a thought to me
All mortal thoughts above;—
And pass in dull unseemly haste,
Nor sight nor spirit clear,
As if the first bewilde'ring taste
Were all the banquet here!

When the proud Sea, for Venice' sake,
Itself consents to wear
The semblance of a land-lockt lake,
Inviolably fair;
And, in the dalliance of her Isles,
Has levelled his strong waves,
Adoring her with tende'rer wiles,
Than his own pearly caves,—

Surely may *we* to simi'lar calm
Our noisy lives subdue,
And bare our bosoms to such balm
As God has given to few;
Surely may we delight to pause
On our care-goaded road,
Refuged from Time's most bitter laws
In this august abode.

Thou knowest this,—thou linge'rest here,
Rejoicing to remain;
The plashing oars fall on thy ear
Like a familiar strain;
No wheel prolongs its weary roll,
The Earth itself goes round
Slower than elsewhere, and thy soul
Dreams in the void of sound.

Thy heart, by Nature's discipline,
From all disdain refined,
Kept open to be written in
By good of every kind,
Can harmonize its inmost sense
To every outward tone,
And bring to all experience
High reaso'ning of its own.

So when these forms come freely out,
And wonder is gone by,
With patient skill it sets about
Its subtle work of joy;
Connecting all it comprehends
By lofty moods of love,—
The earthly Present's farthest ends,—
The Past's deep Heaven above.

O bliss! to watch, with half-shut lid,
By many a secret place,
Where darkling loveliness is hid,
And undistinguisht grace,—
To mark the gloom, by slow degrees,
Exfoliate, till the whole
Shines forth before our sympathies,
A soul that meets a soul!

Come out upon the broad Lagoon,
Come for the hundredth time,—
Our thoughts shall make a pleasant tune,
Our words a worthy rhyme;
And thickly round us we will set
Such visions as were seen,
By Tizian and by Tintorett,
And dear old Giambellin,—

And all their peers in art, whose eyes,
Taught by this sun and sea,
Flasht on their works those burning dyes,
That fervent poetry;
And wove the shades so thinly-clear
They would be parts of light
In northern climes, where frowns severe
Mar half the charms of sight.—

Did ever shape that Paolo drew
Put on such brilliant tire,
As Nature, in this evening view,—
This world of tinted fire?
The glory into whose embrace,
The virgin pants to rise,
Is but reflected from the face
Of these Venetian skies.

The sun, beneath the' horizon's brow
Has sunk, not past away;
His presence is far lordlier now
Than on the throne of day;
His spi'rit of splendor has gone forth,
Sloping wide violet rays,
Possessing air and sea and earth
With his essential blaze*.

Transpierced, transfused, each densest mass
Melts to as pure a glow,
As images on painted glass
Or silken screens can show.
Gaze on the city,—contemplate
With that fine sense of thine
The palace of the antient state,—
That wildly-grand design!

How 'mid the universal sheen
Of marble amber-tinged,
Like some enormous baldaquin
Gay-chequered and deep-fringed,

* The perfect transparency and rich color of all objects and their reflections, in southern countries, for some short time after sunset, has an almost miraculous effect to a northern eye. Whenever it has been imitated in art, it has been generally pronounced unnatural or exaggerated. I do not remember to have ever seen the phenomenon so astonishingly beautiful as at Venice, at least in Italy.

It stands in air and will not move,
Upheld by magic power,—
The dun-lead domes just caught above—
Beside,—the glooming tower.

Now a more distant beauty fills
Thy scope of ear and eye,—
That graceful cluster of low hills,
Bounding the western sky,
Which the ripe evening flushes cover
With purplest fruitage-bloom,—
Methinks that gold-lipt cloud may hover
Just over Petrarch's tomb!

Petrarch! when we that name repeat,
Its music seems to fall
Like distant bells, soft-voiced and sweet,
But sorrowful withal;—
That broken heart of love!—that life
Of tenderness and tears!
So weak on earth,—in earthly strife,—
So strong in holier spheres!

How in his most of godlike pride,
While emu'lous nations ran
To kiss his feet, he stept aside
And wept the woes of man!

How in his genius-woven bower
Of passion ever green,
The world's black veil fell, hour by hour,
Him and his rest between.

Welcome such thoughts;—they well atone
With this more serious mood
Of visi'ble things that night brings on,
In her cool shade to brood;
The moon is clear in heaven and sea,
Her silver has been long
Slow-changing to bright gold, but she
Deserves a sepa'rate song.

ODE

TO THE MOON OF THE SOUTH.

Let him go down,—the gallant Sun!
His work is nobly done;
Well may He now absorb
Within his solid orb
The rays so beautiful and strong,
The rays that have been out so long
Embracing this delighted land as with a mystic song.

Let the brave Sun go down to his repose,
And though his heart be kind,
He need not mourn for those
He leaves behind;
He knows, that when his ardent throne
Is rolled beyond the vaulting sky,
The Earth shall not be left alone
In darkness and perplexity.

We shall not sit in sullen sorrow
Expectant of a tardy morrow,
But there where he himself arose,
Another power shall rise,
And gracious rivalry disclose
To our reverted eyes,
Between the passing splendor and the born,
Which can the most our happy world adorn.

The light of night shall rise,—
Not as in northern skies,
A memo'ry of the day, a dream
Of sunshine, something that might seem
Between a shadow and a gleam,
A mystery, a maiden
Whose spirit worn and sorrow laden,
Pleasant imaginations wile
Into a visionary smile,
A novice veiled in vapo'ry shrouds,
A timid huntress, whom the clouds
Rather pursue than shun,—
With far another mien,
Wilt Thou come forth serene,
Thou full and perfect Queen,
Moon of the South! twin-sister of the Sun!

Still harbored in his tent of cloth of gold
He seems thy ordered presence to await,
In his pure soul rejoicing to behold
The majesty of his successor's state,—
Saluting thy ascent
With many' a tender and triumphant tone
Compast in his celestial instrument,
And harmonies of hue to other climes unknown.

He too, who knows what melody of word
May with that visual music best accord,
Why does the Bard his homage now delay?
As in the antient East,
The royal Minstrel-Priest
Sang to his harp that Hallelujah lay
Of the Sun-bridegroom ready for his way,
So, in the regions of the later West
This blessed even-tide,
Is there no Poet whose divine behest
Shall be to hail the bride?

A feeble voice may give an earnest sound,
And grateful hearts are measured not by power,
Therefore may I, tho' nameless and uncrowned,
Proffer a friendly tribute to thy dower.

For on the midland Sea I sailed of old,
Leading thy line of narrow rippled light,
And saw it grow a field of frosted gold,
With every boat a shadow in the Bright;
And many' a playful fancy has been mine,
As I have watcht the shapes thy glory made,
Glimpsing like starlight through the massive pine,
Or finely-trelliced by mimosa shade;
And now I trace each moment of thy spell,
That frees from mortal stain these Venice isles,
From eve's rich shield to morn's translucid shell,
From Love's young glow to Love's expiring smiles!

We gaze upon the faces we hold dear,
Each feature in thy rays as well defined,
As just a symbol of informing mind,
As when the noon is on them full and clear;
Yet all some wise attempered and subdued,
Not far from what to Faith's prospective eyes
Transfigured creatures of beatitude
From earthy graves arise.

Those evenings, oh! those evenings, when with one,
Then the world's loveliness, now wholly mine,
I stood beside the salient founts that shone
Fit frontispiece to Peter's Roman shrine;

I knew how fair were She and They
In every bright device of day,
All happy as a lark on wing,
A singing, gliste'ning, dancing thing,
With joy and grace that seemed to be
Of Nature's pure necessity;
But when, O holy Moon! thy might
Turned all the water into light,
And each enchanted Fountain wore
Diviner beauty than before,
A pillar of aspiring beams,
An ever-falling veil of gleams,—
She who in day's most lively hour
Had something of composing power
About her mirthful lips and eyes,—
Sweet folly making others wise,—
Was vested with a sudden sense
Of great and grave intelligence,
As if in thy reflex she saw
The process of eternal law,
God's conscious pleasure working out
Through all the Passion, Pain, and Doubt;—
And thus did She and Thou impart
Such knowledge to my liste'ning heart,
Such sympathies as word or pen
Can never tell again!

All spirits find themselves fulfilled in Thee,
The glad have triumph and the mourning balm:
Dear God! how wondrous that a thing should be
So very glorious and so very calm!
The lover, standing on a lonely height,
Rests his sad gaze upon the scene below,
Lapt in the trance of thy pervading glow,
Till pleasant tears obscure his pensive sight;
And in his bosom those long-smothered flames,
The scorching elements of vain desire,
Taking the nature of thy gentle fire,
Play round the heart in peace, while he exclaims,
"Surely my love is out somewhere to-night!"

Why art thou thus companionable? Why
Do we not love thy light alone, but Thee?
Is it that though thou art so pure and high,
Thou dost not shock our senses, as they be?
That our poor eyes rest on thee, and descry
Islands of earth within thy golden sea?
Or should the root be sought
In some unconscious thought,
That thy fine presence is not more thine own
Than are our soul's adorning splendors ours?—
Than are the energies and powers,

With which reflected light alone
Illuminates the living hours,
From our own wells of being brought,
From virtue self-infused or seed of life self-sown?
Thus with ascent more ready may we pass
From this delightful sharing of thy gifts
Up to the common Giver, Source, and Will;
And if, alas!
His daily affluent sun-light seldom lifts
To thankful ecstasy our hearts' dull mass,
It may be that our feeble sight
Will not confront the total light,
That we may love in nature frail
To blend the vivid with the pale,
The dazzling with the dim:
And lo! how God, all-gracious still
Our simplest fancies to fulfil,
Bids us, O Southern Moon, thy beauty hail,
In Thee rejoicing and adoring Him.

PICTURES IN VERSE.

I.

PICTURE BY GIOV. BELLINI, IN THE CHURCH OF THE REDENTORE AT VENICE.

THE VIRGIN.

Who am I, to be so far exalted
Over all the maidens of Judæa,
That here only in this lonely bosom
Is the wonder-work of God revealèd?
Oh! to think this little, little, infant,
Whose warm limbs upon my knees are resting,
Helpless, silent, with his tender eyelids,
Like two pearl-shells, delicately closèd,
Is informed with that eternal spirit,
Who, between the Cherubim enthronèd,
Dwells behind the Curtain of the Temple!

I can only gaze on him adoring,
Fearful lest the simple joy and passion
Which my mother-love awakes within me,
Be not something bold and too familiar
For this Child of Miracle and Glory.

TWO ANGELS.

(PLAYING ON INSTRUMENTS.)

We and the little cheerful goldfinch,
Percht above that blessèd seat,—
He above and we below,—
We with voices and sweet viols,
He with chirping voice alone,—
Glorify the happy Mother,
Glorify the holy Child.
Now that our great heavenly Master
Has put on this wondrous semblance
Of a humble mortal infant,
We, the Angels of his presence,
Are become as simple children,
And beside him watch, admiring
All his innocence and beauty,
Lulling him to downy slumbers
With remembrances of Heaven.

THE CHILD JESUS.

I seem to be asleep,—I seem to dream,—
But it is Ye, Children of fallen Man,
Who dream, not I. Though I am now come down,
Out of the Waking of Eternal Truth,
Here born into the miserable Dream
Of your poor Life, still I must ever wake,
For I am Love, and if ye follow me,
Ye too will wake;—I come to lead the way.

II.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CATHERINE,

BY

VINCENZO CATENA, IN THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA MATER DOMINI, AT VENICE.

—•—

ST. CATHERINE.

(KNEELING.)

I KNEW, I knew it would be so,
That, in this long-expected hour,
Thou would'st not leave me, Christ my Lord!
My poor blind-hearted enemies
Have brought me here to die,—ev'en here,
In this my old delight, the Lake
Of dear Bolsena; they have tied
About my weak and slender neck
A ponde'rous millstone, that my frame

May be dragged down to surest death
Within that undulating tomb.
The stone is there,—the cord is there,
But the gross weight I cannot feel,
For round me, even while I pray,
Beautiful-wingèd childly shapes
Are gathe'ring, smiling glorious smiles.
With what deep looks of sympathy
They dwell upon me ! with what care
Some raise the cord, some raise the stone,
So that it cannot sway me down.
O my soul's lover ! Saviour Christ !
I take this earnest of thy grace,
Assured that I shall lay aside
The coil of this tormented flesh,
Without a thought of fear or pain,—
That, when this mortal shell is cast
Into the stifling element,
That instrument of my distress
Will, at thy blessèd will, be changed
Into the very air of Heaven.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Sister Catherine, sweetest Sister,
Know you not from whom we come?
See, we kneel around you kneeling,
Offe'ring kind and loving duty,
All we can to soothe your suffe'ring,
All we can to make you glad!
Ah! we see you look with wonder,
That our small and tender hands
Can raise up this heavy stone,
Without show of pain or labour:
Do you believe then,
That, because our long gold hair,
And our rosy-rounded faces,
And our laughing lips and eyes,
And our baby-moulded limbs
Are like those of earthly children,
We have not the strength, the glory, and the power,
Which our Father gives unto his dear ones,—
Which he will give to you, most happy Catherine,
For you have loved him?

CHRIST.

(ABOVE, SPEAKING TO AN ANGEL.)

Angel! to thee is given the noble charge
To bear this martyr-mantle perfect-white
To my dear daughter Catherine there below;
That she, when clothed thus worthily, may pass
From the hard triumph of her prison-life
To the embraces of essential Love.

ANGEL.

(KNEELING, AND HOLDING THE MANTLE.)

Burning with delight, I haste
This high mission to perform,—
But it is an awful task,
Even for an Angel's hands,
Such a power of God to hold,
As the sign of Martyrdom.

III.

JESUS AND JOHN CONTENDING FOR THE CROSS.

BY

SIMEONE DA PESARO; IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SEMINARY AT VENICE.

THE CHILD JOHN.

(TRYING TO TAKE THE CROSS OUT OF THE HAND OF JESUS.)

Give me the Cross, I pray you, dearest Jesus!
Oh! if you knew how much I wish to have it,
You would not hold it in your hand so tightly:
Something has told me,—something in my heart here,
Which I am sure is true,—that if you keep it,—
If you will let no other take it from you,—
Terrible things, I cannot bear to think of,
Must fall upon you; show me that you love me:
Am I not here to be your little servant,
Follow your steps and wait upon your wishes?

Why may I not take up the heavy play-thing,
And on my shoulder carry it behind you?
Then, I am older, stronger too, than you are;
I am a child o' the desert and the mountains;—
Deep i' the waste, I shouted at the wild bees,—
They flew away, and left me all the honey:
Look at the shaggy skin I've tied about me;
Surely, if Pain or any other evil
Somewhere about this mystery be hidden,
I am the fittest of the two to suffer!

THE CHILD JESUS.

(HOLDING THE CROSS FIRMLY.)

Ask me not, my gentle brother,—ask no more, it must not be:
In the heart of this poor trifle lies the secret unrevealed
Which has brought me to this world, and sent you to prepare my way.
In the long and weary woodland, where your path of life will lead,
Thousand, myriad, other crosses you will find on every side;

And the same eternal Law that bids me take this chiefest one,
Will be there to give you many, grievous as your strength can bear;
But in vain would you and others sink beneath the holy load,
Were I not with mine before you, Captain of the Crucified;
I must be your elder Brother in the heritage of Pain;
I must give you to our Father,—I must fall for you to rise.

THE VIRGIN.

(WITH HER HAND ON THE CROSS.)

My soul is weak with doubt,—
What can I think or do?
To which of these dear children shall I yield
The object of their earnest looks and words?

Ah me! I see within
That artless wooden form,
A meaning of exceeding misery,—
A dark, dark, shadow of oncoming woe.

Oh! give it up, my child!
I see your bright eyes close,
Your soft fair fingers spattered all with blood,
Your cheeks dead pale;—throw down the horrid toy.

He grasps it firmer still!
I dare not thwart his hand;
For what he does, he does not of himself,
But in the Will of Him who sent him here.

And I, who labor blind
In this abysmal work,
Must bear the weight of dumb expectancy,
Of women first in honor and in woe!

IV.

CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO PURGATORY.

BY GIORGIONE, AT VENICE.

The saving work for man is finishèd,
The kingdoms of the Earth and Air o'erthrown;
So now hath Christ come down among the dead,
Spoiling the Spoiler, to redeem his own.
What blessèd glory plays about that head
For those who here in fiery bondage groan,
Conscious their suffe'ring never could atone
For Sin, till He that once had sufferèd.
And, lo! in patient melancholy state
The synod of the Patriarchs rests apart
Condemned, tho' sons of God by faith, to wait
In this dark place and solitude of heart,
Joyless and tearless, till this Christ should come
To bear them to their Father and their home.

TO GIOVANNI BELLINI.

SUGGESTED BY THE FACT OF THAT PAINTER'S HAVING HAD IN HIS ROOM A GRECIAN STATUE OF VENUS AS A STUDY.

—◆—

Thou didst not slight with vain and partial scorn
The inspirations of our nature's youth,
Knowing that Beauty, wheresoe'er 'tis born,
Must ever be the foster-child of Truth.
Nor didst thou lower the Mother of the Lord
To the mere Goddess of a Pagan bower,
But with such grace as Christians have adored
Those sense-delighting charms thou didst empower;
And would that they who followed thee, and gave
To famous Venice yet another fame,
To be the Painter's home, had done the same,
Nor made their Art the imitative slave
Of those dead forms, as if the Christian span
Embraced no living Poetry for man.

The decline of pure religious feeling in Art in Venice may be, perhaps, most accurately dated from the influence of Arctino over Titian; up to that time he had hardly ever painted a profane subject, and no other artist ever seems to have thought of it. Afterwards such exceptions as Bonifacio and the piety of the people prevented so sudden a degradation as took place in the Roman school from Raffael to Giulio Romano, and in the Bolognese from Francia to Guido; but too soon came the younger Palma and his followers, the Caracci of the Venetians.

TO RAFFAEL.

Raffael, alas! was the only person who conceived the project of recovering the remains of ancient Rome from its rubbish by means of methodical excavations, and this led to no result whatever.

NIEBUHR.

THINE was the scheme, and worthy to be thine,
O Painter-Poet! with care and regu'lar toil,
To raise those marvels from the' entombing soil
With which Greek Art made Rome a place divine.
Though Gothic rage with Christian zeal combine,
Earthquake with flood,—the desolating coil
Of plague two centuries old with Guiscard's spoil,—
Brancaleone's fiercely-sage design,
With other shocks,—of Pagan Rome to make
A mere blank memo'ry,—thou hadst bade awake
Rare shapes from their deep beds, had Sympathy
Lent thee good aid . . . Still I could wish for thee
That thou had'st never yearned for them,—elate
To be in CHRISTIAN Art so great among the Great.

THE IMMORTALITY OF ROME.

"Urbi et Orbi *,"—mystic euphony,
What depth of Christian meaning lies in Thee!
How, from this world apart, this world above,
Selected by a special will of Love,
In its own spi'ritual atmosphere sublime,
Rome lives, a thought, without the reign of Time.
Thus, at the gates of great Eternity,
Nature, the constant he'rald of God, I see,
And ever onward reads she this decree:—
"Let nations have their cycles,—let their course
Still run unchanged, whate'er their inner force;
Let each, whate'er its fabric, firm or frail,
Give its one chapter to the' historic tale,

* The form of the Papal Benediction.

In silence and in shadow then to lie,
And, but in Memo'ry's echo-life, to die ;—
There is an end for all that is begun,
For the Sun's self, and all beneath the Sun."
Who dare deny this record ?—Rome alone ;
Rome has no histo'ry she can call her own ;—
The histo'ry of the Western World is hers,
Writ out in all its mazy characters :
What know we of it, till that name began,
Whose light still hovers o'er the Vatican ?
Where is the fount of all its myriad rills,
But springing 'mid the seven low Latian hills ?
There, thoughtless organs of divine intent,
Some scanty tribes in rudest union blent
Defensive force and martial will combined,
Till lust of conquest filled them, like a mind ;
Then fast the mustard-tree of power up-grew,
Fed into strength by Fortune's choicest dew,
Gathered the winds within its ample room,
And gave the swaying boughs a voice of doom,
For ever striving, as none else had striven,
Earth for its root, and for its branches Heaven *.

* You cannot plant an Oak in a flower-pot ;—she must have Earth for her root, and Heaven for her branches.

HARRINGTON—OCEANA.

And when the flush of life was past,—when came
Age's dry heart and Winter's naked shame,—
The conscious giant trembled at the spell,
Bowed his high head in agony, and fell.
That ruin is before us,—and we all
Have felt the shock of that tremendous fall
Within our quive'ring hearts ; we all have seen
Those temples altarless, and streets grass-green,
And columns standing lone, and basements bare,
And fragments crumbling in the new-found air ;
And, if at last our thought found utte'rance, said,
" Surely this is the City of the Dead ! "

I stood one night,—one rich Italian night,
When the Moon's lamp was prodigal of light,—
Within that Circus, whose enormous range,
Tho' rent and shattered by a life of change,
Still stretches forth its undiminisht span,
Telling the weakness and the strength of Man.
In that vague hour which magnifies the great,
When Desolation seems most desolate,
I thought not of the rushing crouds of yore,
Who filled with din the vasty corridor ;
Those hunters of fierce pleasure are swept by,
And host on host has trampled where they lie.

But where is He, that stood so strong and bold,
In his thick armour of enduring gold,
Whose massive form irradi'ant as the sun,
Baptized the work his glory beamed upon
With his own name, Colossal?—From the day
Has that sublime illusion shrunk away,
Leaving a blank weed-matted Pedestal
Of his high place the sole memorial?—
And is this mira'cle of imperial power,
The chosen of his tute'lage, hour by hour,
Following his doom, and Rome, alive,—awake?
Weak mother! orphaned as thou art, to take
From Fate this sordid boon of lengthened life,
Of most unnatu'ral life, which is not life,
As *thou* wert used to live; oh! rather stand
In thy green waste, as on the palm-fleckt sand,
Old Tadmor *, hiding not its death;—a tomb,
Haunted by sounds of life, is none the less a tomb.—
Then from that picture of the wreck-strewn ground,
Which the arch held in frame-work, slowly round
I turned my eyes and fixt them, where was seen

* Tadmor signifies the "City of the Palm-grove,"—hence the Roman appellation.

A long spare shadow stretcht across the green,
The shadow of the Crucifix,—that stood,
A simple shape of rude uncarven wood,
Raising, erect and firm, its lowly head
Amid that pomp of ruin,—amid the dead,
A sign of salient life;—the Mystery
Of Rome's immortal being was then made clear to
me.

THE PAPAL BENEDICTION,

FROM ST. PETER'S.

Higher than ever lifted into space,
Rises the sove'ran dome,—
Into the Colonnade's immense embrace
Flows all the life of Rome;

The' assembled peasants of a hundred mountains,
Beneath the Sun's clear disk,
Behold that peerless Whole of radiant Fountains,—
Exorcised Obelisk,—

And massive Front, from whose high ridge outslanted,
A spacious awning fell;—
The swaying breadth each gazer's breast enchanted
To follow its slow swell.

Why are they met in their collective might,
That earnest multitude?
Is it to vindicate some injured right,
By threat and clamor rude?

To watch with tip-toe foot and eager eye
Some mere device of Pride,
Meaningless pomp of regal vanity
The void of Truth to hide?

To feed some popu'lar lust which cautious power
Would, for wise ends, restrain,
Not barte'ring to the passion of an hour
What ages toiled to gain?

Thanks, thanks to Heaven, that in these evil days,
Days of hard hearts and cold,
Days where no love is found in all our ways,
When Man is overbold,

And loathes all tender mutual offices,
And nothing old reveres,
Unwilling to be seen upon his knees,
Ashamed of his own tears,—

My soul the gracious privi'lege of this sight,
This priceless sight, has won,
A people of too simple faith to slight
A Father's benison ;—

Not in low flatte'ry, not in selfish dread,
Before one meek old man,
A people, a whole people, prostrated,
Infant and veteran.

By that High-Priest in prelude of deep prayer
Implored and sanctified,
The benediction of paternal care
Can never be denied.

Most surely from that narrow gallery,
The oriflamme unfurled,
Shelters within its grand benignity
Rome and the orbèd world.

The faintest wretch may catch the dew that falls
From those anointed lips,
And take away a wealth that never palls,
A joy without eclipse.

Old pines, that darkly skirt the circling hills,
Bend down in grateful awe,—
Infuse the earth's dry heart, prolific rills,
With Love's unbroken law!

Bear the glad tidings to your sister seas,
Mediterranean waves!
Let eve'ry mutte'ring storm be husht in peace,
Silent the thunde'rous caves!

And would my spi'rit from Earth's embasing rule
Were in this moment riven!
That I might pass through such fit vestibule
Up to the face of Heaven.

THE

ILLUMINATIONS OF ST. PETER'S.

I.

FIRST ILLUMINATION.

Temple! where Time has wed Eternity,
How beautiful Thou art, beyond compare,
Now emptied of thy massive majesty,
And made so faery-frail, so faery-fair:
The lineaments that thou art wont to wear
Augustly traced in ponde'rous masonry,
Lie faint as in a woof of filmy air,
Within their frames of mellow jewelry.—
But yet how sweet the hardly-waking sense,
That when the strength of hours has quencht those gems,
Disparted all those soft-bright diadems,—
Still in the Sun thy form will rise supreme
In its own solid clear magnificence,
Divinest substance then, as now divinest dream.

II.

SECOND ILLUMINATION.

My heart was resting with a peaceful gaze,
So peaceful that it seemed I well could die
Entranced before such Beauty,—when a cry
Burst from me, and I sunk in dumb amaze:
The molten stars before a withe'ring blaze
Paled to annihilation, and my eye,
Stunned by the splendor, saw against the sky
Nothing but light,—sheer light,—and light's own haze.
At last that giddying Sight took form,—and then
Appeared the stable Vision of a Crown,
From the black vault by unseen Power let down,
Cross-topt,—thrice girt with flame:—
Cities of men,
Queens of the Earth! bow low,—was ever brow
Of mortal birth adorned as Rome is now?

III.

REFLECTION.

—•—

Past is the first dear phantom of our sight,
A loadstar of calm loveliness to draw
All souls from out this world of fault and flaw,
To a most perfect centre of delight,
Merged in deep fire;—our joy is turned to awe,
Delight to wonder,—this is just and right;—
A greater light puts out the lesser light,—
So be it ever,—such is God's high law.
The self-same Sun that calls the flowers from earth
Withers them soon, to give the fruit free birth;—
The nobler Spirit to whom much is given
Must take still more, though in that more there lie
The risk of losing All;—to gaze at Heaven,
We blind our earthly eyes;—to live we die.

THE FIREWORKS

FROM THE CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO.

—•—

Play on, play on, I share your gorgeous glee,
Creatures of elemental mirth, play on,—
Let each fulfil his marve'llous destiny,
My heart leaps up and falls in unison.
The Tower round which ye weave, with elfin grace,
The modulations of your burning dance,
Looks through your gambols with a grandsire's face,
A grave but not reproachful countenance ;
Ye are the children of a festive night,
He is the mate of many' an hundred years,—
Ye but attest men's innocent delight,
He is the comrade of their crimes and tears,—
Ye in your joys' pure prime will flare away,
He waits his end in still and slow decay.

ON THE MARRIAGE OF

THE LADY GWENDOLIN TALBOT

WITH

THE ELDEST SON OF THE PRINCE BORGHESE.

LADY! to decorate thy marriage morn
Rare gems and flowers and lofty songs are brought;
Thou the plain utte'rance of a Poet's thought,
Thyself at heart a Poet, wilt not scorn.
The name, into whose splendor thou wert born,
Thou art about to change for that which stands
Writ on the proudest work* that mortal hands
Have raised from earth Religion to adorn.
Take it rejoicing;—take with thee thy dower.
Britain's best blood, and Beauty ever new,
Being of mind; may the cool northern dew
Still rest upon thy leaves, transplanted flower!
Mingling thy English nature, pure and true,
With the bright growth of each Italian hour.

ROME, May 11th, 1835.

* St. Peter's.

ROMAN RUINS.

How could Rome live so long, and now be dead?
How came this waste and wilderness of stones?
How shows the orbèd monster, so long fed
On martyr blood, his bare and crumbling bones?
Did the strong faith, that built eight hundred years
Of world-dominion on a robber's name,
Once animate this corse, and fervent seers
Augur it endless life and shadeless fame?
Stranger! if thou a docile heart dost bring
Within thee, bear a timely precept hence;
That Power, mere Power, is but a barren thing,
Even when it seems most like omnipotence;
The forms *must* pass,—and past, they leave behind
Little to please, and nought to bless mankind.

ON A SCENE IN TUSCANY.

What good were it to dim the pleasure glow
That lights thy cheek, fair Girl, in scenes like these,
By shameful facts, and piteous histories?
While we enjoy, what matters what we know?
What tender love-sick looks on us below
Those Mountains cast! how courteously the Trees
Raise up their branching heads in calices
For the thick Vine to fill and overflow!
This nature is like Thee, all-bright, all-mild;
If then some self-wise man should say, that here
Hate, sin, and death held rule for many' a year,
That of this kindliest earth there's not a rood
But has been saturate with brother's blood,—
Believe him not, believe him not, my child.

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR,

AGED NINE YEARS.

FIESOLE, 1833.

SWEET, serious, child,—strange boy! I fain would know
Why, when I fondly talk and sport with thee,
I never miss the' exuberant heart-flow
Which is the' especial charm of infancy:
Thou art so wise, so sober,—nothing wild,—
I hardly think, yet feel, thou art a child.

For had the' unnatu'ral bondage of a school
Blasphemed the Godhead of thy vernal years,
Encumbered thy light wings with vulgar rule,
And dimmed the blossoms in thy cheeks with tears,—
Thou mightst have been as grave, as still, as now,
But not with that calm smile, that placid brow.

Nor has the knowledge of dull manly things,
And intellect grown ripe before its time,
Defiled thy being's freshly-salient springs,
And made thee conscious of a world of crime;—
With all thy earnest looks, as spirit-free
As ever infant dancing down the lea.

Is it not that within thee, as a shrine,
The power of uncommunicable Art
Is working out its ministry divine,
Silently moulding thy all-virgin heart
To its own solemn ends? Thus dost thou wear
That priestly aspect,—that religious air;

And every circumstance of outward life
Tends this sublime ordainment to unfold;
Is not each chamber of thy dwelling rife
With miracles of purest painters old,—
The Saints and Patriarchs of Art,—who knew
How best to make the Beautiful the True?

Thou hast them all for teachers;—He is there,
The limner cowled*, who never moved his hand
Till he had steept his inmost soul in prayer:
Him thou art bound to in a special band.

* Fra Beato Angelico di Fiesole.

For he was born, and fed his heart, as thou,
On storied Fi'esole's fair-folded brow.

There thou canst read, with deeper reve'rence still,
Rare lessons of the later Monk*, who took
The world with awe of his inspirèd skill,
To which the' Apostle leaning on his book,
And those three marvels in old Lucca shown,
Bear witness, in the days we call our own.

There too Masaccio's grandly-plain design,—
Quaint Ghirlandaio,—and the mighty pair†,
Master and pupil, who must ever shine
Consociate Sove'rans,—thy preceptors are;
Nor pass him by, who with grave lines looks down
Upon thee, Michel of the triple crown.

Thou hast a Sire, whose full-experienced eye
Keeps harmony with an unerring heart,—
Who, of that glorified society,
To thy young sense can every depth impart
How dare I then deny thy perfect joy?
How dare *I* judge thee, thou unearthly Boy?

* Fra Bartolomeo, commonly called the "Frate."

† Pietro Perugino and Raffaello.

AN ITALIAN TO ITALY.

Along the coast of those bright seas,
Where sternly fought of old
The Pisan and the Genoese,
Into the evening gold
A ship was sailing fast,
Beside whose swaying mast
There leant a youth;—his eye's extended scope
Took in the scene, ere all the twilight fell;
And, more in blessing than in hope,
He murmured,—"Fare-thee-well."

"Not that thou gave'st my fathers birth,
And not that thou hast been
The terror of the antient earth
And Christendom's sole Queen;

But that thou wert and art
The beauty of my heart:—
Now with a lover's love I pray to thee,
As in my passio'nate youth-time erst I prayed;
Now, with a lover's agony,
I see thy features fade.

"They tell me thou art deeply low;
They brand thee weak and vile;
The cruel Northman tells me so,
And pities me the while:
What can *he* know of thee,
Glorified Italy?
Never has Nature to his infant mouth
Bared the full summer of her living breast;
Never the warm and mellow South
To his young lips was prest.

"I know,—and thought has often striven
The justice to approve,—
I know that all that God has given
Is given us to love;
But still I have a faith,
Which must endure till death,

That Beauty is the mother of all Love;
And Patriot Love can never purely glow
Where frowns the veilèd heaven above,
And' the niggard earth below.

"The wealth of high ancestral name,
And silken house-hold ties,
And battle-fields' memorial fame,
He earnestly may prize
Who loves and honors not
The country of his lot,
With undiscerning piety,—the same
Filial religion, be she great and brave,
Or sunk in sloth, and red with shame,
A monarch or a slave.

"But He who calls *this* heaven his own,
The very lowliest one,
Is conscious of a holier zone,
And nearer to the sun:
Ever it bids him hail,
Cloud-feathered and clear pale,

Or one vast dome of deep immacu'late blue,
Or, when the moon is on her mid-year throne,
With richer but less brilliant hue,
Built up of turkis stone.

"The springing corn that steept in light
Looks emerald, between
The deli'cate olive-branches, dight
In reverend gray-green;
Each flower with open breast,
To' the gale it loves the best;
The bland outbreathings of the midland sea,
The aloe-fringed and myrtle-shadowed shore,
Are precious things,—Oh, wo the be!
Must they be mine no more?

"And shall the matin bell awake
My native village crowd,
To kneel at shrines, whose pomp would make
A Northern city proud?
And shall the festival
Of closing Carnival

Bid the gay laughers thro' those arches pour,
Whose marble mass confronts its parent hill,
—And *I* upon a far bleak shore!
My heart will see them still:

"Beautiful forms! and aye repent
The waywardness and pride,
That was not with their charms content,
And yearned for aught beside;
For some imagined bliss
I might have slain all this,—
I might have sprent thy gorgeous robe with blood,
And scarred the lucid clearness of thy brow,
Dear land! in sooth, I meant thee good,
But know the madness now.

"What though in poverty and fear,
Thou thinkst upon the morrow,
Dutiful Art is ever near,
To wile thee from all sorrow;
Thou hast a power of melody,
To lull all sense of slavery;

Thy floral crown is blowing still to blow,
Thy eye of glory ceases not to shine,
And so long as these things be so,
I feel thee, bless thee, mine !"

There can be no desire in these lines to depreciate the high merit of the Italian political exiles of this (1831) and former years. If the intensity of their patriotic feelings be here fairly painted, the mightier has been their energy of self-sacrifice, and the heartier should be our admiration. But though

"Deh ! fossi tu men bella o almen piu forte,"

may be the stifled cry of many an Italian heart,—yet the mass, in weakness and in indolence, bear with their governors; and it is with regard to these, that we should weigh, in a just measure, the physical differences between countries, where Life is worth living for its own sake, and those where all the excitement of social and political feelings is necessary to give zest and enjoyment to existence.

ON LEAVING ITALY,

FOR THE SUMMER, ON ACCOUNT OF HEALTH.

Thou summer land! that dost put on the sun
Not as a dress of pomp occasional,
But as thy natu'ral and most fitting one,—
Yet still thy Beauty has its festival,
Its own chief day,
And I, though conscious of the bliss begun,
Must turn away!

I leave thee in thy royallest attire
Of affluent life,—I leave thee 'mid thy wealth
Of sunlight gold and jewels of all fire,—
Led by the paltry care of weakened health
And fear of pain;
Who knows that I shall see, ere I expire,
Thy face again!

I almost could persuade me that too dear
My Northern-island birthdom has been bought,
The vantage-ground of intellect, the clear
And bright expanse of action and of thought,
If I am bound
To limit all the good my heart has sought
To that cold ground.

What is my gain that I can take and mesh
The Beautiful in Nature's deepest sea,
If I am bound the bondman of the flesh,
And must not float upon the surface free?
Why should these powers
Bring nothing but a burden ever fresh
Of yearning hours?

Why do we wish the things we do not dare?
Why do I tremble at my æstuous Soul
That would embrace the burning god, and there
Give up into the elemental whole
Its worthless frame,
Whose instincts guide me captive everywhere,
In grief and shame?

Oh ! what a world of strifes of good and ill
Is this that we are cast in ? Head and Heart,
Body and Spirit, Faculties and Will,
Nothing at peace, all sundered and apart ;
Who would not shun
This war, if Death were *sure* to make him still,
Or make him One !

SWITZERLAND AND ITALY.

Within the Switzer's varied land,
When Summer chases high the snow,
You'll meet with many a youthful band
Of strangers wande'ring to and fro:
Through hamlet, town, and healing bath,
They haste and rest as chance may call,
No day without its mountain-path,
No path without its waterfall.

They make the Hours themselves repay,
However well or ill be shared,
Content that they should wing their way,
Uncheckt, unreckoned, uncompared:
For though the hills unshapely rise,
And lie the colors poorly bright,—
They mould them by their cheerful eyes,
And paint them with their spirit's light.

Strong in their youthfulness, they use
The energies their souls possess;
And if some wayward scene refuse
To pay its part of loveliness,—
Onward they pass, nor less enjoy
For what they leave;—and far from me
Be every thought that would destroy
A charm of that simplicity!

But if *one* blot on that white page
From Doubt or Mise'ry's pen be thrown,—
If *once* the sense awake, that Age
Is counted not by years alone,—
Then no more grand and wondrous things!
No active happinesses more!
The wounded Heart has lost its wings,
And change can only fret the sore.

Yet there is calm for those that weep,
Where the divine Italian sea
Rests like a maiden husht asleep
And breathing low and measuredly;
Where all the sunset-purpled ground,
Fashioned by those delicious airs,
Seems strewed with softest cushions round
For weary heads to loose their cares:

Where Nature offers, at all hours,
Out of her free imperial store,
That perfect Beauty their weak powers
Can help her to create no more:
And grateful for that antient aid,
Comes forth to comfort and relieve
Those minds in prostrate sorrow laid,
Bidding them open and receive!

Though still 'tis hardly she that gives,
For Nature reigns not there alone,
A mightier queen beside her lives,
Whom she can serve but not dethrone;
For she is fallen from the state
That waited on her Eden-prime,
And Art remains by Sin and Fate
Unscatht, for Art is not of Time.

ON

THE CHURCH OF THE MADALEINE, AT PARIS.

I.

The Attic temple whose majestic room
Contained the presence of the' Olympian Jove,
With smooth Hymettus round it and above,
Softe'ning the splendour by a sober bloom,
Is yielding fast to Time's irreve'rent doom ;
While on the then barbarian banks of Seine
That noble type is realised again
In perfect form, and dedicate—to whom ?
To a poor Syrian girl, of lowliest name,
A hapless creature, pitiful and frail
As ever wore her life in sin and shame,—
Of whom all histo'ry has this single tale,—
" She loved the Christ, she wept beside his grave,
And He, for that Love's sake, all else forgave."

II.

If one, with prescient soul to understand
The working of this world beyond the day
Of his small life, had taken by the hand
That wanton daughter of old Magdala;
And told her that the time was ripe to come
When she, thus base among the base, should be
More served than all the Gods of Greece and Rome,
More honored in her holy memory,—
How would not men have mockt and she have scorned
The fond Diviner?—Plausible excuse
Had been for them, all moulded to one use
Of feeling and of thought, but We are warned
By such ensamples to distrust the sense
Of Custom proud and bold Experience.

III.

Thanks to that element of heavenly things,
That did come down to earth, and there confound
Most sacred thoughts with names of usual sound,
And homeliest life with all a Poet sings.
The proud Ideas that had ruled and bound
Our moral nature were no longer kings,
Old Power grew faint and shed his eagle-wings,
And grey Philosophy was half uncrowned.
Love, Pleasure's child, betrothed himself to Pain;—
Weakness, and Poverty, and Self-disdain,
And tranquil suffe'rance of repeated wrongs,
Became adorable;—Fame gave her tongues,
And Faith her hearts to objects all as low
As this lorn child of infamy and woe.

IMPRESSION,

ON RETURNING TO ENGLAND.

In just accordance with attentive sight,
Through airy space and round our planet ball,
The inorganic world is voiced with Light,
And Colors are the words it speaks withal.
Thus has my eye had glad experience
Of that most perfect utte'rance and clear tone,
With which all visi'ble things address the sense,
In lands retiring from the northern zone.
But, oh! in what poor language, faintly caught,
Do the old features of my England greet
Her stranger-son! how powerless,—how unmeet
For the free vision Italy had taught
What to expect from Nature; I must scan
Her face, I fear, no more, and look alone to Man.

WRITTEN IN IRELAND.

CLIFDEN, IN CUNNEMARA.

Here the vast daughters of the eastward tide,
Heaved from the bosoms of the' Atlantic deep,
Lay down the burthen of their mighty forms,
Like some diviner natures of our kind,
Weary with gathered power, and sure to find
Only at once destruction and repose.
Yet no aerial cliff with harsh repulse
Confronts the roving buttresses of sea ;
But on the gentle slant of yielding shores
The wande'rers of a world, intent on rest,
Impress their massive substances, break down
The' uneven slope by measureless degrees,
Wear out the line in thousand rugged shapes,

Detacht, dissolving, and peninsular,
Now closed within broad circle, like a lake,
Now narrow as a river far inland:
Thence rose the name whose very utterance
Is as an echo of the distant main,
The name of Cunnemara,—land of bays.

I stood among those waters and low hills,
Within the circuit of a goodly town,
Furnisht with mart and port and church and school,
Meet for the duteous work of social man
And all the uses of commodious life:
While round me circulated, free and wide,
A shifting crowd of almost giant shapes,
Creatures of busy blood and glorious eyes
Andalusian, (as beseems the race),
Moulds of magnificent humanity.
Then was I told that twenty years before,
Or less, this spot, thus gay and populous,
Was one unmitigated solitude,
And all this outer wonder brought about
By the mere act of one industrious man!
Thus rolls amain the large material world,
Impelled and energised by human will.

Accord not him alone the Hero's name,
Who weaves the complicate historic woof,
Out of the rough disorder of mankind,
Fashioning nations to his own proud law:
Nor him alone the Poet's, who creates,
In his own chamber and exclusive spirit,
A universe of beauty, undisturbed
But by serene and sister sympathies.

For He who in one unremitting chain
Of solemn purpose solders link to link
Of active day and meditative night,
And with unquive'ring heart and hand can meet
Ever distress, ever impediment,
And wring from out a world of checks and flaws
Some palpable and most perspicuous whole
Of realised design and change imprest,
Shall be enrolled among heroic souls,
Though small the scope and slow the growth of deed.

He too, whose care has made some arid soil
Alive with waters of humane delight,
That shall in merry channels gambol on,
Or rest in depths of happy consciousness,—

Has planted and defended in the wild
Some garden of affection, a safe place
For daily love to grow in, and when ripe
To shed sweet seeds, that in their turn will feed
The winds of life with odours, shall be writ
Poet,—Creator, in that book of worth,
Which Nature treasures for the eye of Heaven.

THE SUBTERRANEAN RIVER, AT CONG.

—•—

A PLEASANT mean of joy and wonder fills
The trave'ller's mind, beside this secret stream,
That flows from lake to lake beneath the hills,
And penetrates their slumber like a dream.

Untrackt by sound or sight it wends its way,
Save where this well-like cave descending far,
Through ivy curtains, lets the' uncertain day
Fall on the current and its couch of spar.

A slippe'ry stair will lead you to the brink,
There cast your torch athwart the gleaming tide,
And while you watch the motions of the link
That marries the great waters on each side,—

Think of our common life that glides a span
In partial light dark birth and death between,—
Think of the treasures of the heart of man
That once float by us and are no more seen.

Or, for more cheerful mood, let local fame
Recount, how in old time, the faery sprite,
Finvara, or some such melodious name,
Fashioned this channel for her own delight;

And here, distrest at these unloyal days,
Maskt in a milk-white fish, still sports along,
And altogether leaves the moonlight rays
For the cool shadow of her Caves of Cong.

We arrived at the Coleraine Salmon Leap on the 12th of August, just in time to see the last salmon caught,—the fishery there ending that day.

MSS. Journal.

One moment more before that fatal leap!
One moment more! and now thou hadst been free
To wanton in the autumn sun or sleep
In the warmed crystal of thy little sea.
I saw thee pant,—I saw the flicke'ring shades
Wander beneath thy silver, loth to die,—
And still their glazèd brilliancy upbraids
The heavens that they permit man's perfidy.
But is it not a weak nor sinless thought,
Since Nature's law thus undisturbed has run,
Heedless of all the same hard fate has wrought,
To pass the myriad and deplore the one?
No, no,—our heart has but a narrow span,
Let it hold all the sympathy it can.

VALENTIA.

A FRAGMENT.

WHERE Europe's varied shore is bent
Out to the utmost Occident,
There rose of old from sea to air,
An island wonderful and fair!

Not that on his way to cheer
Our stranger-sister hemisphere,
Here the Sun is pleased to cast
Liefest smiles, as more his last,
Kinder than he gives to us—
Parting love-looks rubious:
Not that here the wind may fling
Odours from his faithless wing,

Scented breath of heaths and bowers,—
Keepsakes from confiding flowers,—
That the rover may be light
For his long Atlantic flight:—
Not that here the haughty land,
Spurning an assistant hand,
Makes a gracious rivalry
With its fere the hoary sea,
Offe'ring up to regal man
All the loyal gifts it can,
Such is not the rarity
O' the Island of the Western Sea.

The name is of a richer tone
Than our baptismal forms may own,—
A Spanish name, I little doubt,
Yet stands no Spanish lady out
When myriad star-rays mingle o'er
Her rose-emblazoned mirador,
Following with a flattered ear
A voice that follows a guitar,
Too mild and mellowed to be near,
But every precious word so clear,
It cannot come from *very* far.

No relick of gone days is here,
No antient-minded cavalier,
Who takes his grandson on his knee
And half in play, half earnestly,
Watches the darling's tender hand
Labour to clasp a well-used brand,
Which sleeps in quiet rust at last,—
And tells him of the echoing past,
What time the gallant Moorish race
Made Christian Spain their dwelling-place,
But Spain could never be the slave
Of stranger hosts, however brave,
And how this steel had helped to free
Her soil from turbaned Paynimrie.

The world has had its childly days,
Passion-bred hopes and earnest plays,—
The world has had its manhood fraught
With power and war and holy thought,—
The world is now grown vain and old,
Her head and heart are palsy cold,—
Light was called to meet her prime,
Thunder waits on her eve-time,
With a light that is not light,
But a death-glare ghastly bright.

And a voice is every where
Louder than thousand trumpets' blare,
"Hear it, ye mortals, every one,
The life from out your world is gone."

So murmurs many' a soul sublime,
Engaoled in this unhealthy time,
Whose embryo-thoughts and half-desires
Feed not his heart's sky-seeking fires;
Who scales all highths, and with sharp ken
Observes the policies of men,
Their aims and objects, and can see,
However wide the' horizon be,
No onward-leading knightly road,
Such as his antient heroes trode,—
No one secure and honest way
Where he can travel night and day,—
But every moment full of fear,
Of Truth forgot and Error near:
He dare not mingle in that maze,
He dare not front the doubtful haze,—
He dare not,—as he would keep whole
His virgin rectitude of soul,
As he holds dear his life to be
His claim to blest Eternity!

And thus, with all his loving mind,
He stands at bay against his kind,
Half sad to see amidst the blind.

Is there no refuge but the tomb
For all this timeless spirit-bloom?
Does earth no other prospect yield
But one broad barren battle-field?
Or if there be some cradling spot
Where such grown evil enters not,
Lies it in countries far away
From where he first drank in the day?
Where, if despairing he be driven,
He must renounce his native heaven,
No more by olden ties be bound,
Take other dress, and let the sound
Of native and of neighbour speech
No more his aliened senses reach!

Be it not so! for thou art here,
O Island beautifully drear!
For thou, encounte'ring such a guest,
Wilt claspt him to thy hardy breast,
And bid him dwell at peace with thee
In thy uncitied modesty;

Let him his spirit slake and steep
In thy immense Atlantic deep,—
Let him from thy rude nature gain
Some sturdy posture to sustain
The burthen of ideal care
To which the Poet's soul is heir.

* * * * *

* * * * *

HISTORICAL POEMS.

SAUL AND DAVID.

And it came to pass, when the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refresht, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

1 Sam. xvi. 23.

"An evil spirit lieth on our King!"
So went the wailful tale up Israel,
From Gilgal unto Gibeah; town and camp
Caught the sad fame that spread like pestilence,
In the low whispers of pale maiden lips,
And tones, half-stifled by religious awe,
Outbreathed from hearts that else had known no fear.

There stood a Boy beside the glooming King,
Whose serfish garb was strangely dissonant

To the high bearing and most gentle air
That waited on his beauty; health and joy,
Tho' tempered now by sorrowing reverence,
Lay on his rose-red cheek; transcendent love
Rounded his brow; and when the deli'cate hand
Swept o'er the chords of that sweet instrument,
With which it long had been his use to fill
The lonely measure of his pasto'ral hours,—
It would have been no weak idolatry
To shroud your eyes and feel your heart beat strong,
As in the presence of one fresh from heaven,
Come down to save that doomed and deso'late man.

A strain of war,—a deep and nervous strain
Of full and solemn notes, whose long-drawn swell
Dies on the silence, slow and terrible,
Making the blood of him who listens to it
To follow the great measure; every tone
Clear in its utterance, and eloquent
Above all words: there was the settled tramp
Of warriors faithful to ancestral swords;
There was the prayer that was not all a prayer,
But rising in a suppliant murmuring
Grows to a war-cry,—"Victory, oh God!
For Israel's God and Israel, victory!"

Then came the onset,—chord fast following chord,
In passio'nate clang, as if the conscious harp
Were prodigal of all its life of sound,
To give that awful feint reality.

From off the couch, at one enormous leap,
To where his helmet and long-shadowing spear
And brazen target hung beside the wall,
Bounded the King, and graspt the quive'ring arms.
He raised his hand, and, as to gathe'ring hosts,
Shouted, " Where's Jonathan?—he is not here;
Watchman, look out! I cannot find my son;
Here is the Ark,—there is the Philistine,—
There too is Jonathan! On, Israel,—on!
Alloo! Alloo*!" He ceast; and while the short
Heroic blaze flared and died out, he cried,
In a most faint and miserable voice,
" He is not *there*,—the foe!—he is within!"
And fell upon his face, even as before.

The harper paused; and when a struggling tear
Dropt on the string from his uplifted eye,
The spirit of the strain was changed;—awhile

* 1 Sam. xiv. 17 to 20.

An under-current of discordant tones
Went trickling on, beneath the random fingers,—
Till, from a labyrinth of tangled notes
Came up with placid step a shape of sound
Distinct and fine-proportioned, redolent
Of love,—a fair old Hebrew melody,
Most plaintive numbers, born of that pure time,—
That golden-shaded, half-revealèd time,
When Israel's patriarchs fed their wealth of herds
About the myrrhine shades of Araby,
And eve'ry passion out of their chaste hearts
Gusht freely forth, and wove a sepa'rate song.
But, more than all, to the tormented King
That rythm was full of memo'ries ;—fold by fold
The grey loose veil of long-forgotten Time
Shrunk back before the mystic minstrelsy ;
He was once more the simple Benjamite,
The gallant Boy, the innocent, the brave,
The choicest and the goodliest of his peers * ;
He was once more the owner of a life
Whose moments were all feathered, and kept cool
From scorching passion by continuous airs
Of gaysome hope and self-contenting joy.

* 1 Sam. ix. 2.

Awful command and peri'lous empery
The diffi'cult mean of power,—the hard, hard, task
To be at once a lord and servitor,
To rule allotted kingdoms and obey,
The caster of the lot, the King of Kings,
Had set no snaring choice before him, *then*.
How often in the vain and weary guest
When he pursued his father's wande'ring droves
All down the slopes of pleasant Ephraim
Thro' Shalisha and Shalim, had his ear
Drunk in the burthen of that antique tune
Giving him brotherhood with stranger-lands:
Oft too the maid, whose image ever lived
Within his breast, stronger than all real things,
Returning homeward when the' expiring Sun
Mingled its life-blood with the waning light,
Had clothed her long farewell in that rich form,
While he, expecting on some distant height
His starlit watch, sent back such loud response
As made a chorus of the echoing hills.

As when the surges of the midland sea,
Break on the carious, citron-fruited, shore
Of Western Italy in morn's grey prime,
Slowly above the coasting Apennine,

The sun appearing meets the wallowing foam
And pierces it with light, till eve'ry wave
Loses its frowning aspect and now sports
About the myrtles, showe'ring precious gifts,
Rare diamond globes and flecks of liquid gold:
So to the fury of the darkened Spirit
The sunrise of that harmony unveiled
Its beauty, making beautiful, so fell,
Transformed from out its former terri'ble shape,
The passion into tender sympathy.
Tears, blessed tears, in full profusion burst
From the dry sockets, breaking up the dams
And foul embankments, arts of ill had raised
Against all holy natu'ral impulses.

From the prostration of his body' and soul
Saul rose, but as a man who long had lain
Wasted by dire disease,—pale, sorrowful,
Yet calm and almost smiling in his woe.
And did He not rejoice, that marve'llous youth,
To see his pious mediating work
Consummated? Glowed not his downy cheek
With a serene delight, while fade away
The notes in linge'ring trills and solemn sighs?
But is his countenance of other hue

When Saul, in gene'rous gratefulness profuse,
Proffers him jewels, wealth, and titled name,
Or other gift, whate'er his soul might crave.
A pallid tremor swept across his face,
As with a suppliant but determi'nate mien
He speaks, "Oh! deem not, deem not, gracious Lord!
That I, of mean estate, dare scorn the boon
Thy sove'ran bounty would pour forth on me,
But yet no gems, no gold, no praise for me!
Glory and praise and honor be to Him,
In the great circle of whose single will
I and my harp are most poor instruments,
His mightiness and goodness to proclaim.
Go forth into the clear and open air,
Look at all common things, and thou wilt find
The form of all this outward Universe
Is as the Body of the Living God:
And eve'ry movement, odour, shade, and hue
Is animate with music as divine
As lute, or harp, or dulcimer: to thee,
The' anthemnal voice of aged cataracts,
The jovial murmurings of summer brooks,
The carol that emblazoned flowers send up
From the cold earth in spring-time, the wild hymn
Of winter blasts sitting among the pines,

And the articu'late pulse of that large heart
Which beats beneath the Ocean, will be parts
Of the eternal symphony sublime,
In which the Maker of all worlds reveals
The spirit-depths of his untiring Love;
If then all Nature, rightly askt, can do
What I have done, how dare I claim reward?"

In sooth it was a wondrous sight to see
How far above the proud and vaunted king,
In all the moral majesty of being,
That moment stood the God-selected child.
Thrice through the chamber with irreso'lute step
Saul paced, and prest his hand upon his temples,
As if to hide the passing cloud of shame,
Then answe'ring not a word, and motioning
That David should retire, in thoughtfulness
Or prayer, he past into the outer hall.

DECIUS BRUTUS,

ON THE COAST OF PORTUGAL.

Having traverst the whole of the country to the very coast, the conqueror at last turned his standards, but not until, with a certain dread of sacrilege and conscious horror, he had discovered the Sun sinking into the ocean, and its fire overwhelmed by the waters.

FLORUS.

NEVER did Day, her heat and trouble o'er,
Proclaim herself more blest,
Than when, beside that Lusitanian shore,
She wooed herself to rest:

And, freed from all that cumbrous-gilded dress
That pleased the lusty noon,
Lay down in her thin-shaded loveliness,
Cool as the coming moon.

There stood the gentlest and the wildest growth
Together in the calm,
The nightingale's long song was over both,
A dream of bliss and balm.

Pale-amber fruit among the cloiste'ring leaves
Hung redolent and large,
Strong-spikèd aloes topt the broad rock-eaves
Above that fair sea-marge.

When through a thunder-cleft, now summer-dry,
A loosely-straggling band,
Plated in war's offensive blazonry,
Descended on the strand.

Men of flint brows, hard hands and hearts, were they,
Hunters of weaker men,
Shedders of blood for pleasure and for prey,
Wolves of the Roman den.

From their great home they had come out so far,
Nor ever loss or shame
Had lowered their fierce pride, they likened war
To pestilence or flame.

Frighting the tongueless caves with untuned cries,
They leapt from stone to stone;
But last, and linge'ring, with unheedy eyes,
The leader came alone.

And suddenly upon the clear-edged orb,
Fast-verging to the sea,
He gazed, like one whom music doth absorb
In mournful reverie.

His burly limbs were frosted with strange cold,
His blood grew half-asleep,
Beholding the huge corpse of ruddy gold
Let down into the deep.

At last to that wild crew he called aloud,
"O soldiers! we have been
Too daring-hardy,—we have been too proud,—
Too much have done and seen.

"It is a ventu'rous and unholy thing
To try the utmost bound
Of possibility,—our froward wing
Has reacht forbidden ground.

" We stand upon the earth's extremest edge,
Beside the sacred bed
Of the Sun-god,—it is a privilege
Too lofty not to dread."—

But they were drunk with glory as with wine,
They heard him not that day;
That coast to them was nothing but a sign
Of Rome's earth-circling sway;

Till when, like dancers by amazing thunder
Stunned in their mad career,
Their bold mid-revel ceased for very wonder,
Their insolence for fear.

For they had caught a sound, first quive'ring low,
Then wide'ning o'er the brine,
As of a river slowly poured into
A red-hot iron mine *.

* For the notion of the fearful noise which accompanied the fall and quenching of the sun in the great Western Ocean, consult Strabo, lib. iii.; Juvenal, xiv. 279; Ausonius, epist. xviii. The wide credit which this local tradition obtained may be inferred from the serious refutation of the physical fact in the second Book of the Cyclic Theory of Cleomedes.

And with confede'rate looks and held-in breath,
They watcht the molten round
Loosing its form, the swelte'ring ooze beneath,
To that terrific sound.

The hissing storm toward the darke'ning land
A heated west-wind bore;
They closed their ears, they croucht upon the sand,
But heard it more and more.

They saw the whole full Ocean boil and swell,
Receiving such a guest
As elemental Light inscrutable,
Within its patient breast.

At last into the void of dreary space
The tumult seemed to roll,
And left no other noise on Nature's face
Than the waves' muffled toll.

But to their first mistempered haughtiness
Those hearts returned no more,—
They were encumbered with a sore distress,
Crusht to the very core.

The Chief this while had stood apart, and bowed
In penitential pain
His staunch war-soul, till that now-supple croud
His voice thus reacht again :—

" Oh what a sanctu'ary have we profaned
In this unblest emprize !
Oh that a jealous wrath may be restrained
By timely sacrifice !

" On these crag-altars let our choicest spoil
Be laid with humblest prayer ;
For what avails our valor or our toil,
If angered Gods be there ?

" As ye hold dear the memory of Rome,
Implore the Lords of Heaven,
That we once more may bear our victo'ries home,
This sacrilege forgiven ! "

So was it done :—columns of vapo'rous grey
Rose from that lone sea-glen,—
And Brutus and his followers turned away
Wiser and gentler men.

* * * * * *

Thus, in the time when Fancy was the nurse
Of our young human heart,
The Power whose voice is in the universe,
And through each inmost part

Vibrates, and in one total melody
Man and Creation blends,
Workt out by marvel and by prodigy
Its high religious ends.

Knowledge to us another scene displays,
We fear nor sight nor sound;
Nature has bared her bosom, and we gaze
Into the vast profound.

A myriad of her subtlest harmonies
Our learnèd ears can tell;
We dare those simple liste'ners to despise,
But do we *feel* as well?

THE DEATH OF ALMANZOR.

Almanzor was the Campeador of the Moors in Spain, the guardian of the fainéant King Hixem ;—it is thought he aspired to the crown.

Two and fifty times Almanzor had the Christian host
o'erthrown ;
Still again the Christians gatherèd, by despair the
stronger grown.

Cityless and mountain-refuged they approacht the
Douro's shores,
Falling, as a storm in summer, on the unsuspecting
Moors.

Valiantly the Moslem rallied, all unordered as they
stood,
Till the Evening, in her shadow, bore them safe across
the flood.

Then they cried, "The stream's between us; now can
we their schemes defy;"—
But the great Almanzor spoke,—"I have retreated, and
I die."

"Allah, keep us from such evil!" prayed the faithful,
crouding round,
While the wise Arabian leech his wounds examined,
stauncht, and bound.

"Lightly has the Christian toucht thee,—much for thee
is yet in store;
Many are thy years, but Allah gives his conque'rors
many more.

"Do not the huge bells, that summoned pilgrims to
Iago's shrine,
Hang within our prophet's temple, and confess thy work
divine?

"What is it that one small moment thou and thine did
seem to yield,
Wielders of Mohammed's sword, and guarded by
Mohammed's shield?

"Few shall be their boastful hours,—thou in wrath wilt rise again;
Thou shalt cleanse the mountains of them, like the cities and the plain."

So consoled the duteous servant, but he could not still the cry
Bursting from Almanzor's lips,—"I have retreated, and I die."

Once he rose and feebly spoke,—"My friends, I perish of self-scorn;
Shame is come on my white hairs,"—and thus he died the morrow-morn.

Fiercest hands in sorrow trembled, as they deeply dug the grave,
On the spot where Azrael's lance had struck the captain of the brave.

There his spirit's dearest brethren, closest comrades of his glory,
Laid him as a Moslem-martyr, in his garments torn and gory.

There too, from his side unsevered, lay his old familiar
brand,
Never to be toucht and tarnisht by a less victorious
hand.

From a chest that in his marches ever had been borne
before him,
Holy dust from two and fifty battle-fields was sprinkled
o'er him;

While arose the imprecation, "Utter Death to Christian Spain!"
Praise to Jesus and his mother, that the vow was vowed
in vain!

THE DEPARTURE OF ST. PATRICK FROM SCOTLAND.

FROM HIS OWN "CONFESSIONS."

Twice to your son already has the hand of God been shewn,
Restoring him from alien bonds to be once more your own,
And now it is the self-same hand, dear kinsmen, that to-day
Shall take me for the third time from all I love away.

While I look into your eyes, while I hold your hands in mine,
What force could tear me from you, if it were not all divine?
Has my love ever faltered? Have I ever doubted yours?
And think you I could yield me now to any earthly lures?

I go not to some balmier land in pleasant ease to rest,—
I go not to content the pride that swells a mortal breast,—
I go about a work my God has chosen me to do;
Surely the soul which is his child must be his servant too.

I seek not the great city where our sacred father dwells,—
I seek not the blest eremites within their sandy cells,—
I seek not our Redeemer's grave in distant Palestine,—
Another, shorter pilgrimage, a lonelier path is mine.

When sunset clears and opens out the breadth of western sky,
To those who in yon mountain isles protect their flocks on high
Loom the dark outlines of a land, whose nature and whose name
Some have by harsh experience learnt, and all by evil fame.

Oh, they are wild and wanton men, such as the best
will be,
Who know no other gifts of God but to be bold and
free,
Who never saw how states are bound in golden bonds
of law,
Who never knew how strongest hearts are bent by
holy awe.

When first into their pirate hands I fell, a very
boy,
Skirting the shore from rock to rock in unsuspecting
joy,
I had been taught to pray, and thus those slavish days
were few,
A wondrous hazard brought me back to liberty and
you.

But when again they met me on the open ocean field,
And might of numbers prest me round and forced my
arm to yield,
I had become a man like them, a selfish man of pride,
I could have curst the will of God for shame I had not
died.

And still this torment haunted me three weary years, until
That summer night,—among the sheep,—upon the seaward hill,
When God of his miracu'lous grace, of his own saving thought,
Came down upon my lonely heart and rested unbesought!

That night of light! I cared not that the day-star glimmered soon,
For in my new-begotten soul it was already noon;
I knew before what Christ had done, but never felt till then
A shadow of the love for him that he had felt for men!

Strong faith was in me,—on the shore there lay a stranded boat,
I hasted down, I thrust it out, I felt it rock afloat;
With nervous arm and sturdy oar I sped my wate'ry way,
The wind and tide were trusty guides,—one God had I and they.

As one from out the dead I stood among you free and whole,
My body Christ could well redeem, when he had saved my soul;
And perfect peace embraced the life that had been only pain,
For Love was shed upon my head from every thing, like rain.

Then on so sweetly flowed the time, I almost thought to sail
Eve'n to the shores of Paradise in that unwave'ring gale,
When something rose and nightly stood between me and my rest,
Most like some one, beside myself, reflecting in my breast.

I cannot put it into words, I only know it came,
A sense of self-abasing weight, intolerable shame,
"That I should be *so* vile that not one tittle could be paid
Of that enormous debt which Christ upon my soul had laid!"

This yielded to another mood, strange objects gathered near,
Phantoms that entered not by eye, and voices not by ear,
The land of my injurious thrall a gracious aspect wore,
I yearned the most toward the forms I hated most before.

I seemed again upon that hill, as on that blissful night,
Encompast with celestial air and deep retiring light,
But sight and thought were fettered down, where glimme'ring lay below
A plain of gasping, struggling, men in every shape of woe.

Faint solemn whispers gathered round, "Christ suffered to redeem,
Not you alone, but such as these, from this their savage dream,—
Lo, here are souls enough for you to bring to him, and say,
These are the earnest of the debt I am too poor to pay."

A cloud of children freshly born, innumerable bands,
Past by me with imploring eyes and little lifted hands,
And all the Nature, I believed so blank and waste and dumb,
Became instinct with life and love, and echoed clearly "Come!"

"Amen!" said I; with eager steps a rude descent I tried,
And all the glory followed me like an on-coming tide,
With trails of light about my feet I crost the darkling wild,
And, as I toucht each suffe'rer's hand, he rose and gently smiled.

Thus night on night the vision came, and left me not alone,
Until I swore that in that land should Christ be preacht and known,
And then at once strange coolness past on my long fevered brow,
As from the flutter of light wings: I feel, I feel it now!

And from that moment unto this, this last and proving one,
I have been calm and light at heart as if the deed were done;
I never thought how hard it was our earthly loves to lay
Upon the altar of the Lord, and watch them melt away!

Speak, friends! speak what you will,—but change those asking looks forlorn,
—Sustain me with reproachful words,—uphold me with your scorn:
—I know God's heart is in me, but my human bosom fears
Those drops that pierce it as they fall, those full and silent tears.

These comrades of my earliest youth have pledged their pious care
To bear me to the fronting coast, and gently leave me there:
It may be I shall fall at once, with little toil or need,—
Heaven often takes the simple will for the most perfect deed:

Or, it may be that from that hour beneath my hand may
spring
A line of glories unachieved by hero, sage, or king,—
That Christ may glorify himself in this ignoble name,
And shadow forth my endless life in my enduring
fame.

—All as He wills! Now bless me, mother,—your cheek
is almost dry:—
Farewell, kind brothers!—only pray ye may be blest
as I;
Smile on me, sisters,—when death comes near each of
you, still smile,
And we shall meet again somewhere, within a little
while!

CHARLEMAGNE,

AND

THE HYMN OF CHRIST.

—•—

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.
MATT. xxvi. 30; MARK xiv. 26.

THE great King Karl sat in his secret room,—
He had sat there all day;
He had not called on minstrel knight or groom
To wile one hour away.

Of arms or royal toil he had no care,
Nor e'en of royal mirth;
As if a poor lone monk he rather were,
Than lord of half the earth.

But chance he had some pleasant company,
Dear wife, familiar friend,
With whom to let the quiet hours slip by,
As if they had no end.

The learnèd Alcuin, that large-browed clerk,
Was there within, and none beside;
A book they read, and, where the sense was dark,
He was a trusty guide.

What book had worth so long to occupy
The thought of such a king,
To make the weight of all that sovranty
Be a forgotten thing?

Surely it were no other than the one,
Whose every line is fraught
With what a mightier king than He had done,
Conquered, endured, and taught.

There his great soul, drawn onward by the eye,
Saw in plain chronicle pourtrayed
The slow unfolding of the mystery
On which its life was stayed.

There read he how when Jesus, our dear Lord,
To men of sin and dust had given,
By the transforming magic of his word,
The bread of very Heaven;

So that our race, by Adam's fatal food
Reduced to base decline,
Partaking of that body and that blood,
Might be again divine,—

After this wondrous largess, and before
The unimagined pain,
Which, in Gethsemane, the Saviour bore
Within his heart and brain,—

He read, how these two acts of Love between,
Ere that prolific day was dim,
Christ and his Saints, like men with minds serene,
Together sung an hymn.

These things he read in childly faith sincere,
Then paused and fixt his eye,
And said with kingly utterance—"I must hear
That Hymn before I die.

"I will send forth through sea and sun and snows,
To lands of every tongue,
To try if there be not some one which knows
The music Jesus sung.

"For I have found delight in songs profane
Trolled by a foolish boy,
And when the monks intone a pious strain,
My heart is strong in joy;

"How blessèd then to hear those harmonies,
Which Christ's own voice divine engaged,
'T would be as if a wind from Paradise
A wounded soul assuaged."

Within the Empe'ror's mind that anxious thought
Lay travai'ling all night long,
He dreamed that Magi to his hand had brought
The burthen of the Song;

And when to his grave offices he rose,
He kept his earnest will,
To offer untold guerdons unto those
Who should that dream fulfil.

But first he called to counsel in the hall
Wise priests of reve'rend name,
And with an open counte'nance to them all
Declared his hope and aim.

He said, " It is God's pleasure, that my will
Is made the natu'ral law
Of many nations, so that out of ill
All good things I may draw.

" Therefore this holy mission I decree,
Sparing no pains or cost,
That thus those sounds of dearest memory
Be not for ever lost."

They spake. " Tradition streameth thro' our race,
Most like the gentle whistling air,
To which of old Elias veiled his face,
Conscious that God was there :

" Not in the storm, the earthquake, and the flame,
That troubled Horeb's brow,
The splendor and the power of God then came,
Nor thus he cometh now.

"The silent water filtereth through earth,
One day to bless the summer land;
The Word of God in Man slow bubbleth forth,
Toucht by a worthy hand.

"Thus, in the memo'ry of some careful Jew
May lurk the record of a tune
Wont to be sung in ceremonial due
After the Paschal noon;

"And thy deep yearning for this mystic song
May give mankind at last
Some charm and blessing that has slept full long
The slumber of the Past."

The King rejoiced, and, at this high behest,
Men to all toil and change inured,
Past out to search the World if East or West
That legend still endured.

What good or ill those ventu'rous hearts befell,
What glory or what shame,—
How far they wandered, I have not to tell;
Each has his sepa'rate fame.

I only know, that when the weight of hours
The prime of mortal heads had bowed,
He, slowly letting go his outward powers,
Spoke from his couch aloud :—

" My soul has waited many' a linge'ring year
To taste that one delight,
And now I know at last that I shall hear
The hymn of Christ to-night.

" Look out, good friends! be prompt to welcome home,
Straight to my presence bring,
My messengers, who hither furnisht come
The Song of Christ to sing."

Dark sank that night, but darker rose the morn,
That found the western earth
Of the divinest presence stript and shorn
It ever woke to birth.

It seemed beyond the common lawful sway
Of Death and Nature o'er our kind,
That such a one as He should pass away,
And aught be left behind.

In Aachen Abbey's consecrated round,
Within the hollowed stone,
They placed the' imperial Body, robed and crowned,
Seated, as on a throne.

While the blest Spirit holds communion free
With that eternal quire,
Of which on earth to trace the memory
Was his devout desire.

THE BEGGAR'S CASTLE*.

A STORY OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

—•—

Those ruins took my thoughts away
To a far eastern land;
Like camels, in a herd they lay
Upon the dull red sand;
I know not that I ever sate
Within a place so desolate.

Unlike the relics that convert
Our hearts with antient Time,
All moss-besprent and ivy-deckt,
Gracing a lenient clime,
Here all was death and nothing born,—
No life but the unfriendly thorn.

* I am indebted for this legend, and part of its conduct, to Jean Reboul, the baker-poet of Nismes, the Burns of modern France.

"My little guide, whose sunny eyes
And darkly-lucid skin,
Witness, in spite of shrouded skies,
Where southern realms begin;
Come, tell me all you've heard and know
About these mighty things laid low."

The Beggar's Castle, wayward name,
Was all these fragments bore,
And wherefore legendary fame
Baptized them thus of yore,
He told in words so sweet and true,
I wish that he could tell it you.

A puissant Seigneur, who in wars
And tournays had renown,
With wealth from prudent ancestors
Sloping unbroken down,
Dwelt in these towers, and held in fee
All the broad lands that eye can see.

He never tempered to the poor
Misfortune's bitter blast,
And when before his haughty door
Widow and orphan past,
Injurious words, and dogs at bay,
Were all the welcome that had they.

The Monk who toiled from place to place,
That God might have his dole,
Was met by scorn and foul grimace,
And oaths that pierced his soul;
'T was well for him to flee and pray,
"They know not what they do and say."

One evening, when both plain and wood
Were trackless in the snow,
A Beggar at the portal stood,
Who little seemed to know
That Castle and its evil fame,
As if from distant shores he came.

Like channelled granite was his front,
His hair was crisp with rime,—
He askt admittance, as was wont
In that free-hearted time;
For who would leave to die i' the cold
A lonely man and awful-old.

At first his prayer had no reply,—
Perchance the wild wind checkt it,
But when it rose into a cry,
No more the inmates reckt it,
Till where the cheerful fire-light shone,
A voice out-thundered,—"Wretch! begone."

"There is no path,—I have no strength,—
What can I do alone?
Grant shelter, or I lay my length,
And perish on the stone;
I crave not much,—I should be blest
In kennel or in barn to rest."

"What matters thy vile head to me?
Dare not to touch the door!"
"Alas! and shall I never see
Home, wife, and children more?"—
"If thou art still importunate,
My serfs shall nail thee to the gate."

But, when the wrathful Seigneur faced
The object of his ire,
The beggar raised his brow debased
And armed his eyes with fire:
"Whatever guise is on me now,
I am a mightier Lord than thou!"

"Madman or cheat! announce thy birth."—
"*That* thou wilt know to-morrow."
"Where are thy fiefs?"—"The whole wide Earth."
"And what thy title?"—"Sorrow."
Then ope'ning wide his ragged vest,
He cried,—"Thou canst not shun thy guest."

He stampt his foot with fearful din,—
With imprecating hand
He struck the door, and past within
Right through the menial band:
"Follow him, seize him,—There—and there!"
They only saw the blank night air.

But He was at his work: ere day
Began the work of doom,
The Lord's one daughter, one bright may,
Fled with a base-born groom,
Bearing about, where'er she came,
The blighting of an antient name.

His single son, that second self,
Who, when his first should fall,
Would hold his lands and hoarded pelf,
Died in a drunken brawl;—
And now alone amidst his gold
He stood, and *felt* his heart was cold.

Till, like a large and patient sea
Once roused by cruel weather,
Came by the raging Jacquerie,
And swept away together
Him and all his, save that which time
Has hoarded to suggest our rhyme.

THE END.

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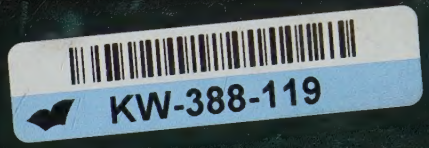
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